DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 251 398 SO 016 113

AUTHOR Reed, Beth, Ed.; And Others
TITLE The Structure of Knowledge. A Feminist Perspective. Proceedings of the Annual GLCA Women's Studies Conference (4th, November 10-12, 1978).
INSTITUTION Great Lakes Colleges Association, Ann Arbor, MI. Women's Studies Program.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 67p.; For proceedings of subsequent conferences, see SO 016 114-117. Some pages contain light print that may not reproduce clearly.
AVAILABLE FROM GLCA Women's Studies Program, 220 Collingwood, Suite 240, Ann Arbor, MI 48103 ($4.00).
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Conventional Instruction; Educational Change; Epics; *Feminism; Higher Education; Integrated Curriculum; Interdisciplinary Approach; Linguistics; Poetry; Scholarship; Sex Bias; Sex Differences; Sex Fairness; Sex Role; Sex Stereotypes; Toys; Womens Education; *Womens Studies
IDENTIFIERS Italy; *Structure of Knowledge; Women in Literature

ABSTRACT

A keynote address, five selected conference papers, and two panel discussions are presented in these conference proceedings. The keynote address, "Breaking the Disciplines" (Florence Howe), examines the development of traditional disciplines as the mainstream of higher education's curriculum and the omission of women from these disciplines. An opening panel (Joan Straumanis, Barbara Smith, and Mary B. Williams) then presents a feminist perspective concerning the structure of knowledge. The first of five selected papers, "Interdisciplinary Studies and Women's Studies: Questioning Answers and Creating Questions" (Diana Grossman Kahn), is developed around six basic questions believed to have motivated the creation of women's studies. The second paper, "Generic 'Man' and Mortal Woman" (Joan Straumanis), draws a distinction between the sexism of language and sexism expressed in language. The third paper, "Sex Differences in Choices of Toys and Modes of Play in Nursery School" (Margaret Berrio), explores toy choices as indicators of the development of sex roles in children, while a fourth paper, "Women in Epic" (Anne Shaver), examines the role of women in epic poetry. In the fifth paper, Margherita Repetto presents an historical look at the development of women's liberation in Italy after World War II. A final presentation by the closing panel (Rita Kipp, Paul Lauter, and Joan Straumanis), entitled "The Feminist Critique: Plans and Prospects" and a schedule of conference events conclude the document. (LH)

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The Structure of Knowledge
A Feminist Perspective

Proceedings of the Fourth Annual GLCA Women's Studies Conference

November 10-12, 1978

SO 016 113

Edited by Beth Reed
Editorial Committee: Brenda Bankart, Rita Kipp, and Marianne Whelchel

The Great Lakes Colleges Association
Women's Studies Program

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The papers in this publication are edited versions of the Conference presentations. The opening and closing panel discussions were transcribed, then edited for conciseness and clarity, while maintaining, we hope, their essential flavor and spontaneous character.

The GLCA Women's Studies Program is supported by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education and by the institutions the Program serves: Albion College, Antioch College, Denison University, DePauw University, Earlham College, Hope College, Kalamazoo College, Kenyon College, Oberlin College, Ohio Wesleyan University, Wabash College, and The College of Wooster.

Keynote Address: BREAKING THE DISCIPLINES
Florence Howe, GLCA Visiting Scholar
in Women's Studies, 1978-79

I want to say a few personal words before I begin this talk. I want to say how much I am enjoying my work for GLCA, my teaching at Oberlin, and what easterners call "midwest sanity" in general, yes, despite all. My recent visit to the College of Wooster was a pleasure. I look forward to residence at Denison and to visits to other GLCA campuses. It is also good to be back at a GLCA conference, and to note certain important changes: the conference is four times the size of that first one only two and a half short years ago; it includes students in generous numbers; its focus has also grown more inclusive. As for me, I come to the conference with certain new equipment: bright blue running shoes and a packet of poems, also new.

I made the decision to work with GLCA this year in part because of the commitment of Jon Fuller and Beth Reed and others to the development of women's studies. I came also because of the support of such people as Lou Brakeman, Sam Carrier, Ann Fitzgerald, Paula Goldsmid, and Bob Longsworth. I wanted to see whether a feminist faculty member, coming to a campus as "outsider," could influence, encourage, and support in a meaningful way the redirection of faculty research and curriculum development. What might a faculty seminar accomplish? Are there other useful vehicles for such faculty development? I was also curious about small, prestigious, private, liberal arts, coeducational colleges. As institutions, they were entirely new to me. What effect do such colleges have on women students? How do their mainly male faculties respond to women's studies? Are coeducational colleges of means the appropriate institutions for experimenting with and developing what higher education has never had -- a truly coeducational curriculum? Such tantalizing questions and others will provide the staple of my work with you all year. In short, thank you for the opportunity.

As a feminist without a crystal ball interested in the future of women's studies, I turned more than five years ago to the history of higher education for women, in search of what I assumed would be analogies. I found none. Rather, I found an interesting and coherent development that led, if not directly then logically, to women's studies in our own time. Women in the nineteenth century achieved the right to study what men did, the right to study the "men's curriculum." Fifty years after gaining that right -- I am using the date of suffrage for convenience and because it has a certain educational logic as well -- women in our time began to challenge the accuracy and value of that men's curriculum, not only for themselves but for men as well. In 1978, after a decade of development, most of the disciplines have begun

to respond to the challenge of women's studies. Scholars are finding it essential and interesting to open new books and to consider, perhaps for the first time in their intellectual lives, the histories and present existence of half the human race. Women's studies, then, is a departure in the history of women's education.

Today I want to look at women's studies against another historical perspective: that of the development of the mainstream of higher education's curriculum, the men's curriculum, those myriad disciplines and divisions of knowledge we call traditional. They are less than a century old.

Before the Civil War and for more than two hundred years, a college education was conceived of as "discipline" for religious and moral "piety." The college transmitted the values of the society to future ministers, lawyers, and members of what were called in the seventeenth century "the ruling class," obviously men. While the central vision of the college was religious, the main subjects of study were Greek, Latin, and mathematics, in addition to moral philosophy, the Bible, and rhetoric. Greek, Latin, and mathematics were the hard subjects, in fact, around which the concept of mental "discipline" was formed. "Discipline" was not used to describe a particular branch of learning in the nineteenth century, but rather the exercise of one's mental faculties. Discipline in that sense was alleged to be cumulative and contagious: that is, if one exercised one's mind on Greek irregular verbs or on solid geometric axioms, one's store of "discipline" would grow and would allow the "catching" of other knowledge. It is also clear that Latin and especially Greek were the "filters" (that mathematics still is today) for keeping certain people -- including women -- out of the mainstream college curriculum, or out of the colleges altogether.

So for nearly two hundred and fifty years colleges educated a thin stream of relatively privileged white males in the colonies and then the states through a stable curriculum that we would describe as "required," rather than "elective"; holistic rather than fragmented; religious rather than secular; and thoroughly traditional, in that its focus was the Greeks, the Romans, the Hebrews and early Christians, and more rarely Europe. By the mid-nineteenth century, such education produced the Christian man, not so much for a particular vocation, but for "manliness," a combination of culture and piety, a posture substituting for American aristocracy.

During the period immediately after the Civil War, almost to the end of the century, there was accomplished in higher education what Laurence Veysey has called "the transformation of the curriculum," a phrase that women's studies advocates of course use commonly today to express their future goals. Argument raged, through much of the nineteenth century, about the "relevance" of college education to students' work lives. As Veysey has put it, "What the orthodox college president would not concede, in effect, was that a minister was simply one kind of careerist and an engineer another."

The new curriculum was, of course, science. In its broadest meaning, as "an organized body of information about a particular subject," it was not threatening. But its advocates saw science as "a philosophy which claimed to account for the entire universe." Such claims were, of course, mistrusted or seen as efforts to unseat the religious charge of the curriculum. "Science, paraded nakedly," Veysey tells us, "seemed vulgar; it appeared to denigrate the position of man in the universe. Its subject matter was also believed too easy and undemanding to deserve a major place in the classroom. In theory, science might reluctantly be given a realm of its own, comparable to that of religion in providing an understanding of the universe. In practice, science was chastised for abandoning its humble subservience. 'The spirit of science,' said a New York professor in 1879, 'while it is positive and affirmative in its appropriate sphere, becomes negative and contradictory, if not even blasphemous and scoffing, the moment it transcends the proper boundaries of that sphere to speak of things spiritual . . . .'"

Of course by now you have heard the analogy: it is striking how much the battle over the transformation of the curriculum and the divisions of knowledge one hundred years ago mirrors our own battle today. To repeat -- think now of women's studies as "an organized body of information about a particular subject" (I am adding "women") -- it was not threatening. But as "a philosophy which claimed to account for the entire universe," it is both "mistrusted" and "seen as efforts to unseat the religious charge" (read "mainstream" today) of the curriculum.

It is also striking to those of us whom women's studies has sensitized to language and imagery to hear science described as female. Only a woman would be "paraded nakedly," and of course would, in such condition, then be called "vulgar." Describing science as "reluctantly being given a realm of its own," or as being "chastised for abandoning its humble subservience" and as "transcending the proper boundaries of that sphere to speak of things spiritual," reminds us of the male-centeredness of the universe of knowledge that can in one of its sectors denigrate the detestable newcomer -- science -- as female and at the same time in the burgeoning research university, declare the new kingdom of science as off limits to women.

There are striking differences, as well as similarities, between our own battle and this one. Here is one similarity: science was seen then, as women's studies is today, as dangerously critical of the mainstream curriculum. A difference: the science curriculum was a fragmented one: its impact on the mainstream was to transform the curriculum into a galaxy of separate disciplines, with departments and professional associations, and subspecializations, etc. This transformation was accomplished between the mid-seventies and the first World War. It is this galaxy of departments, all less than a century old, that is now the campus' mainstream.

If we look at Oberlin's curriculum exactly one hundred years ago -- in 1878 -- we can see the beginnings of the shift from the required traditional curriculum to the new electives in science. A freshman student in 1878 was required to study Latin (Livy, Horace, and prosody, as well as Latin composition); Greek (Xenophon, Greek historians, and prose composition in Greek); the history of Rome; mathematics (algebra and trigonometry); and rhetoric. During the following three years, students continued the study of Latin and Greek, mathematics, and rhetoric, as well as Evidences (advanced Bible study). They also studied French and German as well as English language and literature. In addition they were to select from the following group of science courses, one or two of which were offered each term: physics, botany, astronomy, chemistry, zoology, engineering, mineralogy, physiology, geology, psychology. In the seventies and eighties at Oberlin, two courses in psychology were offered: one focused on the "Nature of the Soul. Consciousness. Sense of Perception. Memory and Imagination." The other on "Power and Processes of Thought." Finally, for seniors in their last semester, there was one course in economics, one in art, one in ethics.

More clearly even than the current women's studies curriculum, the new nineteenth century curriculum was a smorgasbord, an introduction to as many of the sciences as possible, added to the staples I have already mentioned -- Latin, Greek, the Bible, rhetoric, mathematics. The principle is accretion: more and more new offerings. There were no "departments" as we understand the term: what was then called "The Department of Philosophy and the Arts" administered the curriculum I have described -- the "Classical" curriculum -- as well as the one called at first the "Ladies," then the "Literary" curriculum. Its major distinction had been the substitution of the modern languages -- French, German, and English -- for the classical ones. In addition, beginning in the fall of 1891, Oberlin freshmen could enter a "Scientific Course" that was described (differently from the Literary one, I should note) as "upon an entire equality with the Classical Course." The battle, one could assume, had ended, and science had won. No Greek was required for admission or for graduation and somewhat less Latin for admission (only two books of Virgil!). Relatively few subjects were, in fact, required, and even some of them were in science; hence, students could enjoy an enormous intellectual smorgasbord in science. Only the following nonscience subjects were required: four courses in German, four courses in French, three in philosophy, three in English, and three in Bible. It is interesting to note that during this lengthy transitional period in colleges like Oberlin, the proliferation of various "subjects" continued: by 1909-10, courses were offered in Italian, Spanish, Gothic, sociology, economics, political science, among others.

The fragmentation of the curriculum was followed, not surprisingly, by the organization of departments, and perhaps Oberlin was relatively slow in this development, since, of course, such new graduate institutions as Johns Hopkins University were leading the way by 1876. And professional associations, formed in order to support the faculty who were organizing

undergraduate and graduate departments in various disciplines, were founded with astonishing regularity during the years between 1883 (MLA) and 1911 (College Art Association). Indeed, Veysey says that by 1910 the departmentalization of academe into "disciplines" was complete.

Writing in 1936, Robert Hutchins described The Higher Learning in America. "The modern university," he said, "may be compared with an encyclopedia. The encyclopedia contains many truths. It may consist of nothing else. But its unity can be found only in its alphabetical arrangement. The university is in much the same case. It has departments running from art to zoology; but neither the students nor the professor know what is the relation of one departmental truth to another...." Looking back wistfully, Hutchins adds, "The medieval university had a principle of unity. It was theology.... It was an orderly progression from truth to truth ... humanism was theocentric...." Hutchins' view usefully summarizes for us that "transformation" that created the departmentalized, professionalized curriculum: the disciplines have not only fragmented knowledge; the college has organized nothing that reassembles the fragments into a holistic vision. Indeed, if all courses of study are "equal" to all other courses of study, the university becomes an institution that accredits persons for particular kinds of work, including the development of knowledge in these specific areas.

But I want to suggest that there has been still another pattern of curricular development in American higher education. It is not the liberal arts college pattern, to begin with, for it is vocational, not disciplinary in the sense in which the separate sciences and social sciences develop. I am thinking of the courses of study labeled "agriculture" and "mechanics" in the late 1860's and 1870's in Kansas and elsewhere that became agriculture and engineering. Similarly the "woman's" curriculum of Kansas in the 1870's that became home economics by the early twentieth century. There are still other examples of this kind of curricular development, and I think we need to remember that it is always present, though it represents a strand quite different from what we think of today as the division of knowledge within the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences. I am thinking of nursing, social work, medicine, law. These are curricular streams that, like theology and teacher training, provide interdisciplinary study, vocational in function.

If, however, as Veysey says, the fragmentation of the curriculum had gone as far as it could go by 1910, then there were still other developments possible. I am thinking, for example, of the founding of the Linguistic Society of America in 1924, and of the still ongoing debates about the interdisciplinary fields of biochemistry and American studies, both products of the thirties. Since then, other area studies have been established, not only geographical -- Far Eastern studies, for example -- but temporal: Medieval studies. And of course, during the sixties a particular form of area studies developed: black studies and other ethnic studies, and, finally, of course, women's studies.

Ten years into women's studies, what are its approaches to the curriculum? to knowledge? to the breaking of disciplines? What, from a feminist perspective -- that is, from the perspective of women's studies -- are the significant elements to keep in mind as we approach and develop the structure of knowledge? I will name five elements: the historical view -- which I have already made use of; a critical view; an empirical practice; a holistic view; a problem-centered practice.

Though I have spent time on history already, I will make a few comments more. It is important strategically to keep remembering how new are all that we call "traditional" disciplines. Some of those grouped under the rubric humanities, about which I have said very little, are even newer than the sciences and social sciences. In one sense, modern English departments and the literary curriculum, especially in American literature, are hardly fifty years old. In general also, the basic characteristic of the curriculum these past hundred years has been its instability. Compared to the previous two hundred years, it has been in a continual state of development, mainly through accretion, though it has also continued both to splinter into subspecialties and to unite in interdisciplinary areas. It is also useful to remember that women's studies is not an isolated example of an interdisciplinary approach to knowledge.

These remarks suggest that for women's studies a historical approach is an essential tool. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that we have used history to locate ourselves, to emerge from invisibility, to rebuild our connections with the past and with each other all over the planet. I will say more about this subject on Sunday during the final session when I will talk about visions of the future. For me at least, perspective on knowledge begins with history.

Second, a critical view. This is the perspective with which, to use a bit of more recent history, all of us approached our disciplines or our children's textbooks ten years ago, or, if we are just coming to women's studies, last week. It was the initial step: we asked at first either "where are the women," or what are the "images" offered of those women present? Are they imagined as cats, sexy and dishonest, or as beautiful flowers, fragile and evanescent? In the students' papers, there was an unpleasant shock implicit in the naming of these images -- we have all had that experience. We have also looked with disbelief into indices of significant books -- including histories -- to discover nothing at all on women. (I will set aside the still more difficult question about why women should be an index entry at all).

In brief -- I need not belabor this point in 1978 -- we approached the disciplines with questions about the presence or absence of women and discovered the assumptions about women's lives and needs that a male-centered culture and curriculum had produced. Quietly and with fanfare both, we announced our finding on myriad questions: the curriculum, we regretted, was untrue, it taught lies either through omission or distortion. Most important, and I will discuss

this later, it was biased in favor of males, male history, male writers, even males as subjects of experimental work then reported as research findings in human behavior. Even child development -- I remember one feminist critic announcing this with disgust in a classroom at Johns Hopkins in 1969 or 1970 -- even child development was about male children.

Element number three is an empirical practice. Indeed all of the foregoing -- the critical and the historical perspectives -- emerge and are palpable in an avalanche of information, an outpouring of scholarship, studies, and statistics. It is not only that we learned early that we can't be critical without being accurate and exhaustive in our gathering of data, and scrupulous in our analysis of that data -- what we used to call "doing our homework." We also decided early to fill in the gaps and blank spaces: if women were not in the history texts, perhaps it was as much out of ignorance as malice. We would restore that history. The task of that restoration, its myriad details, will, I am convinced, occupy scholars for a century. In some respects, we have only begun to explore the areas of women's experience still untouched by historians. I am thinking of Paul Lauter who is now working on women's literary societies; of Mary Rothchild who is writing a history of the Girl Scouts; of Oberlin's Betsy Cazden, who has been working, since her graduation in the early seventies, on a biography of Oberlin's own Nettie Brown Blackwell -- a first biography of that significant pioneer.

One other note about this empirical practice. I am certain that one hundred years ago, in some areas, there was similar excitement about knowledge, and students studying the "higher criticism" or geology, for example, felt that they were on -- if you will forgive the cliche -- the "frontiers of knowledge." One characteristic peculiar to our time, however, is the rapidity with which our "frontiers" are shared. On the whole, we do not need to wait for learned journals or meetings of annual professional associations. Manuscripts are circulated in typescript: a number of essays in feminist literary criticism on reserve in the Oberlin library for my students will not be published for a number of years. And findings are reported orally to groups who then report to other groups. Since we in women's studies are teaching a developing curriculum, we live close to the empirical bone. I need not tell those of you engaged in this practice of its possibilities for error on the one hand and its intense excitement on the other.

The fourth and fifth elements need to be viewed together. From the perspective of the existing "traditional" disciplines, both appear profoundly antithetical to critical, empirical scholarship. It is one thing to say I am studying the function of women in a particular village society in India. That is acceptable, even in departments that regard studying women as a less important activity than studying men; it is still scholarship, though perhaps trivial. But when I say I am coming at this study from a feminist perspective that claims to make sense of women's lives and men's lives and the village society in a coherent, holistic sense -- then I am treading dangerous waters. Further, to get on to

the fifth element -- the problem-centered practice -- if I say I am doing this study because I want to, indeed am highly motivated to, improve the lives of women in that village and in many other villages of the world, I have probably just removed myself from consideration as an "objective" scholar or researcher.

The holistic perspective is not altogether new to higher education. After all, the battle I described earlier in this talk was won by the foes of educators whose central perspective was theist and whose central text was the Bible. Their fears that science would ascend to the control of the curriculum were justified, and yet, despite the flirtation with social Darwinism, there has been no effort to replace the earlier orthodoxy. Indeed, one finds scientists and social scientists talking of "objectivity" and the "objective method," as though they were substitutes for a value-centered curriculum. Note that the campus was not without values: in human terms, it valued men and not women; white folks and not folks of color; Protestants rather than Catholics or Jews; and Americans (I don't mean Native Americans) above all other peoples of the earth.

What do feminists have to say about values? Why is their perspective regarded as unobjective, unorthodox? Are feminists biased? What is the difference between a feminist perspective viewed as a "lens" and a feminist perspective viewed (thanks to Joan Straumanis) as a normative position? I am not going to try to answer these questions in detail. I assume that we will be discussing them through the length of this conference. I will offer a couple of observations, however.

First, when we say we value women, and are interested in their advancement, many men and some women assume that we mean to devalue men or deliberately block their advancement. It is not surprising that men expect women coming to power to be as nasty as men have been in power, and some women at least are not going to disappoint them. On the other hand, women may be smart enough to learn not to repeat the mistakes of centuries of male domination.

Second, when we describe ourselves as researchers or teachers with a feminist perspective, we do not mean that our research is flawed either by poor design or execution slanted to achieve certain results. Nor do we mean that we teach dogma to true believers. There is a great deal of confusion abroad about the issue of "objectivity" in research and teaching. Generally, "objectivity" is confused with what I would describe in the classroom as fairness or openness to many points of view; and in the area of research, as rigorous, exact, and honest gathering and reporting of data. On the other hand, no human being, and few statements other than facts -- and they are few -- can be without perspective. Only the announcement of today's date, the geographical location of this conference, and the number of people in this room might be classifiable as "objective" facts, without perspective. Were I to begin to talk about this group, this meeting, I would have to assume a perspective. I would talk from my position as a conscious person, a woman, a feminist teacher and scholar.

As feminist teachers and scholars, most of us live in two worlds: in the disciplines that trained us, and in women's studies. We bring to our courses in women's studies a complex body of interdisciplinary knowledge that I cannot take the time here even to itemize. It is this complex body of interdisciplinary knowledge informed by a feminist perspective that allows us to communicate across disciplines. It is also something else: what I have called the problem-centered curriculum. From a feminist perspective, knowledge has a normative social purpose -- not the continuation of the world as we know it, but the transformation of that world, in part by the knowledge we are producing and teaching. It is this part of feminism, for example, that urges students and faculty to turn their attention to research that is needed, that will make a difference. Let us have no more dissertations on Henry James, I continue to urge, or on Melville or Hawthorne; let us "remember the ladies," those hoards of "female scribblers" that Hawthorne feared. It is interesting to me that a number of women scientists trained in graduate schools to run rats or experiment on other animals, after a relatively brief association with women's studies, have decided, even against the advice of male colleagues, to begin research on human subjects -- in all cases on women, and in at least two, on questions relating to menopause.

A word about dangers: they are many for a new young area of study. The most obvious is oversimplification -- which may follow ignorance about history, or a failure to consider race, class, or religious or national practices, conditions, beliefs. There is also the danger attendant on all efforts to be holistic, idealistic, and visionary: however satisfying such efforts may be for students and scholars, we may, from the outside, seem to be ingenuous, naive about the complexitites of a technological, multicorporate universe -- in which mainland China has just invited Panama to build hotels for tourists. How can knowledge be viewed whole cloth in so complex and technologically-sophisticated a world as ours? How can we teach undergraduates without being simplistic? These are real difficulties and real problems that we must consider. There are others, of course, that you can add, among them the fact that these days it is impossible for a women's studies scholar to read in more than two disciplines, and often that is terribly difficult.

I want to conclude on a somewhat different note: not <u>our</u> problems or dangers, but the problems we present to the world out there that has just begun to hear that women's studies lives. And I want to have a bit of fun with this one. You remember my quoting from Laurence Veysey's version of the impact of the new science curriculum on the old orthodoxy. Here is his analysis of the two decades during which that battle over the curriculum was fought one hundred years ago. I ask you to listen, keeping in mind our own current battle with the traditional, male-centered disciplines:

> When someone is convinced that he and his circle of associates know what is absol tely true, and at the same time that this truth is los g rather than gaining power in

> the world at large, his responses are somewhat limited. At least several possibilities exist, however: intransigence, panic, or self-deceptive compromise in an effort to gain leverage. It is probable that during the twenty years of major resistance by pious educators, from 1865 to 1885, all these symptoms appeared. The predominating spirit, nonetheless, was one which combined stubbornness with partial resignation.

It has struck me from the first that "intransigence" has been our first problem, not so much with the administrators of colleges, but with certain strong senior elements in the faculty, and especially on graduate faculties. "Panic": what can be said about that? I see it especially in the graduate schools' closing of ranks behind disciplines, in opposition to interdisciplinary research and programs. And as for "self-deceptive compromise in an effort to gain leverage," that is what we may have to thank, along with our primary invisibility, for gaining such legitimacy on campuses as we have won thus far. Veysey's final picture -- "The predominating spirit ... which combined stubbornness with partial resignation" -- I leave to you to envision the persons on your faculty or in your administration who come to mind. Ten years ago we should not have been able to enjoy the parallels in this portrait of an academic battle. Perhaps we can look forward, ten years from now, to still other portraits.

Opening Panel: THE STRUCTURE OF KNOWLEDGE: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Members of the Panel: Barbara Smith, fellow at the W.E.B. DuBois Institute for Afro-American Research, coeditor of Black Women's Studies (forthcoming, Feminist Press), and a forthcoming issue of Conditions focusing on black women; Mary B. Williams, School of Biological Science, Program on Culture and Science, University of Delaware. Moderator: Joan Straumanis, Philosophy, Denison.

JOAN STRAUMANIS: I myself would like to hear answered or hear beginnings of answers to several questions in tonight's discussion, and the subsequent discussions during the next two or three days. These are not rhetorical questions. I really feel we need to address them very concretely. We need to decide on one or more of the following models for women's studies at our colleges. Do we think of women's studies as therapeutic? Do we think of women's studies as correcting the traditional curriculum and being a transitional phase in an unhealthy curriculum which will degenerate and become unnecessary as soon as the curriculum is restored to health and women are restored to their correct place in the curriculum? That is, is women's studies restorative and a therapeutic part of the curriculum? Or is women's studies a permanent, revolutionary new component of the curriculum, which will take its place side by side with the other components of the curriculum? Or, as perhaps Florence has suggested most strongly (in her keynote address), is women's studies a revolutionary new curriculum which will eventually in some way replace the curriculum that we now have? I think we need to think concretely and in practical terms about which of these models we wish to use in structuring our thinking about women's studies in our own colleges. Let's begin the discussion by hearing from Barbara, and then from Mary, and then from you (in the audience).

BARBARA SMITH: What I want to talk about is my discipline, and I consider my discipline to be black women's studies. Just by stating that, I think we see immediately some of the anomalies involved in trying even to discuss some of the questions already raised here in relationship to my discipline. For example, when I was asked to speak at this conference, Beth said she would like me to talk about black studies and women's studies. I wrote back that I would like to talk about black women's studies, because that is what I do; and also because it raises consciousness to let people know that such a thing as black women's studies exists.

I was sitting here a few seconds ago wondering how many of you have even conceptualized black women's studies as something in and of itself. I won't put people on the spot and ask them to raise their hands, but I was really curious about that, because as far as I'm concerned, black women's studies is a discipline that I invented -- I and a handful of others.

In 1972 I sat in on a course that Alice Walker taught at U. Mass., Boston, on black women writers; and that was the first time it ever occurred to me -- even though I have been reading black literature all of my life -- that I or someone else could teach a course that was entirely black women writers. I should say that my "traditional" discipline is literature, but since I've always taught Afro-American literature, that doesn't count either. So I came to see how far afield, then, my perspective is when it comes to conceptualizing within a traditional academic framework. Then, as I said, in 1972 I audited Alice Walker's course; and I swore that the next time I taught, wherever it was, I would teach black women writers myself -- and I have been doing that ever since.

As you heard in the introduction, I have co-edited with two other women, a book, Black Women's Studies, that will be brought out by the Feminist Press. I'm really looking forward to the impact of that book, not just on women's studies people in this country, but upon the women's movement as a whole. I think it will open up a whole new way of thinking about knowledge.

One thing about black women's studies is that it challenges the most basic assumptions held by the traditional white male academy. When you go back to your respective schools on Monday, if you say to some of those elements that I'm talking about, "I went to a conference this weekend and I heard someone talk about black women's studies. What do you think about that, or what do you think that is?" I'm sure you will get some vapid, intransigent replies. I think what might be expressed is the degree of contempt with which the traditional white male academy looks upon anything that I think of as being really important.

In answer to the question that Joan Straumanis raised, about what conception of women's studies we want to formulate as a group -- not that we'll all agree at the end of this conference -- I think I'd go with the third conception, which is women's studies replacing what is men's studies. I think that men's studies has brought us nothing but chaos, ruin, and destruction, and I'm being perfectly literal. I mean, it is men's studies that has brought us the technologies that produced the neutron bomb, and then a discipline called political science, or whatever, that justifies it. So I think that at least we can do better than that. I suspect that, if nothing else, women's studies taken to its logical conclusion is life-giving as opposed to life-taking.

I'm going to read you some notes about black women's studies, and then I'm going to read from part of the introduction to the book that I mentioned, which is on the politics of black women's studies.

One of the questions that has been raised is about the interdisciplinary nature of women's studies. Black women's studies is definitely interdisciplinary, and even literature, which is basically what I teach, is interdisciplinary. Through black women's literature you find accessible black women's culture, music, politics, history, sociology -- always in the work of black women writers themselves. The literature of black women is at the present time the largest available body of information about black women. When we were doing Black Women's Studies, we found that we got more literary contributions than any other kind. I believe that is because when black women writers -- and I'm talking about novelists and poets -- sit down to write a book, there is nothing in between them and their creation. In other words, a black woman writer does not have to ask a scientific establishment how to think about black women's lives. There's a kind of immediacy in literature that makes the materials quite vital, and for the moment I think it's the best body of knowledge that we have. An example of how accessible and interdisciplinary black women's literature can be is Margaret Walker's novel, Jubilee. In the beginning of each of her probably more than forty chapters she quotes lines from black spirituals -- so you could learn forty different song lyrics by reading this so-called novel.

Another question that was raised is, "How will women's studies transform knowledge as we know it?" My feeling is that the advance in black women's studies will most directly transform women's studies itself. It may not necessarily make an impact upon other parts of the curriculum initially, but I think that it is women's studies that most direly needs to be transformed in this way. Women's studies needs, of course, to be about the study of all women. I talk about Afro-American women because that is my particular identity, but I think you could hear me using the term "black women" as a metaphor for the inclusion of all women, globally as well as in

this country, within the discipline that is called women's studies.

I think that black women's studies will also have impact upon black studies. (I am less sanguine about its transforming white male studies -- that is, the mainstream of academic activities.) I think that studying black women's studies and black women's literature will transform black studies because the experiences encompassed are totally different from everything else that happens here. If you teach black women's studies from a feminist perspective -- and this is, of course, an experience that I have had many times now -- you are assaulting most of your students' cherished beliefs, be they white or black. Although black students will undoubtedly have some consciousness about black experience in America, they will have seen that experience primarily through a male filter. So, doing black women's studies is a transforming, not to say, frightening experience.

Another aspect of the transforming function of black women's studies is the fact that it comes out of the political movement in this country which is black feminism. It is really hard for me to divide the two because, as was already mentioned, I am a black feminist activist, and I've been teaching black women's studies at the same time as I've been working on black feminist movement building. And I do feel that it is the existence of the black feminist movement that has given the space for something called black women's studies to exist. Necessarily, then, these are activities of transformation: the transformation resulting from political action and the knowledge that complements and makes possible political movement. Black feminism and black women's studies are transforming because they require and indicate that fundamental political and social change is taking place. I feel that it's essential that black women's studies be feminist, and that black women's studies at least address issues of sexual politics as well as the politics of class and race -- not to mention, promote radical, fundamental social change. Unfortunately, this is not largely the case. There is a body of research on black women in this country done not only in this century but also in the last, but very little of that research and the research currently being done is being done from a feminist perspective.

I think that if you don't look at women, whoever the women are, from a feminist perspective, then you kind of miss the whole picture; because feminism is, of course, the theory and the analysis that makes the experience of women comprehensible. Unfortunately, many black women, particularly black women in the academy, are not and have not been a part of the feminist movement, often for very valid reasons. But I and other black women who are involved in both movements -- black women's studies and black feminism -- really want to push that kind of analysis.

An example of what a lack of feminist perspective results in, as far as black woment's studies is concerned, is the dearth of materials on black lesbians in women's studies courses. This is a clear example of how a lack of a feminist analysis blinds us to the experience of an actual group of black women. I think that feminism encompasses all women, and that means, logically, that when you're thinking about a field called black women's studies it must include women who are women-identified, as well as women who are male-identified. It must also include women who are poor, as well as women who are exceptions and were able to triumph over a cruel economic system. I think anything less than respecting and looking at the lives of all women is not feminism but merely female self-aggrandizement.

I'll read to you now from the introduction to Black Women's Studies which expands on many of the things that I just said, probably in a more coherent fashion:

"Only a Black and feminist analysis can sufficiently deal with the materials of Black women's studies and it is a creative Black feminist perspective that will enable the field to expand. A viable Black feminist movement will also lend its political strength to the development of Black women's studies courses, programs and research and the funding these require. Black feminism's total commitment to the liberation of Black women, its recognition of Black women as valuable and complex human persons will provide the analysis and spirit for the most incisive work on Black women."

What I tried to get at is the respect that black feminism has for black women, which is a necessary precondition to being able to study about us.

"....Only an approach that acknowledges the reality of sexual oppression in the lives of Black women, as well as the oppression of race and class, that is a feminist, pro-woman perspective, will make Black women's studies the transformer of consciousness it needs to be.

Women's studies began as a radical response to feminists' realization of the ways that knowledge of ourselves has been deliberately kept from us by institutions of patriarchal 'learning.' Unfortunately, as women's studies becomes both more institutionalized and at the same time more embattled within traditional academic structures, the radical life-changing vision of what women's studies can accomplish has constantly been diminished in exchange for acceptance, respectability and the career advancement of individuals. This trend in women's studies is a trap that Black women's studies cannot afford to fall into. Because we are so oppressed as Black women, every aspect of our fight for freedom, including teaching and writing about ourselves, must in some way further our liberation. Because of the particular history of Black feminism in relationship to Black women's studies, especially the fact that the two movements are still new and have evolved nearly simultaneously, much of the current teaching, research and writing about Black women is not feminist, is not radical and unfortunately is not even analytical."

Maybe even describing our experiences is an important initial step, but it will not be sufficient to get us to where we need to go. And a lot of the things I say about black women's studies I, of course, feel about white women's studies, or just women's studies in general.

"....A descriptive approach to the lives of Black women, a 'great Black woman' in history or literature approach or any traditional male-identified approach will not result in intellectually groundbreaking or politically transforming work. We cannot change our lives by teaching solely about 'exceptions' to the inroads of white-male oppression. Only through exploring the experience of supposedly 'ordinary' Black women whose 'unexceptional' actions merely insured that we and the race survived, will we be able to begin to develop an overview and an analytical framework for understanding the experience of Afro-American women.

Courses that focus upon issues that affect Black women's real lives are ideally what Black women's studies, that is also Black feminist studies, should be about. Courses would examine such topics as the sexual violence we suffer in our own communities; the developing of Black feminist economic analysis that will reveal for the first time Black women's actual relationship to American capitalism; the situation of Black women in prison and the connection of these women's incarceration to our own; the social-history of Black women's domestic work and investigations of Black women's mental and physical health in a society whose 'final solu-

> tion' for us and our children is death. It is important to consider also that although much research about these issues needs to be done, much insight about them can be arrived at through studying the literary and historical documents that already exist. Anyone familiar with Black literature and Black women writers and who is not intimidated by what their reading reveals, should have no trouble developing a course on rape, battering and incest as viewed by Black female and male authors. Analysis of these patriarchal crimes could be obtained from the substantial body of women's movement literature on the subject of violence against women, some of which would need to be criticized for its conscious and unconscious racism. Speakers from a local rape crisis center and a refuge for battered women would provide essential first hand information. The class and instructor could work together to synthesize these materials and to develop a much needed Black feminist analysis of violence against Black women."

And, of course, this is a subject that has not even been talked about. It is a subject the surface of which has not been scratched.

> "....Developing such a course illustrates what a politically based, analytic Black feminist studies can achieve. It would lead us to look at familiar materials in very new and perhaps initially frightening ways, but ways that will produce the kinds of truth that will change the lives of living Black women including our own. Black feminist issues, the real life issues of Black women would be integral to our conceptions of subject matter, themes and topics for research.
>
> That politics has much to do with the practice of Black women's studies is perhaps most clearly illustrated by the lack of positive investigations of Black Lesbians in any area of current Black scholarship. The fact that a course in Black Lesbian studies has, to our knowledge, yet to be taught has absolutely nothing to do with the 'non-existence' of Black Lesbian experience and everything to do instead with the fear and refusal to acknowledge that this experience does in fact exist. Black women-identified-women have existed in our communities throughout our history, both in Africa and America."

Audre Lorde had an article in the April issue of the Black Scholar about this, in which she talks about the existence of female-female relationships in Africa and, by implication, in America, too, and I am sure that most of the people who read the article were not pleased to find out that, indeed, that was the case.

> "....That the subject of Black Lesbianism and male homosexuality is greeted with fearful silence or verbalized homophobia results of course from the politics of institutionalized heterosexuality under patriarchy, that is the politics of male domination.
>
> A letter written by the Black playwright and political activist, Lorraine Hansberry, in 1957 to The Ladder, a pioneering Lesbian periodical, makes clear this connection between homophobia and the sexual oppression of all women. She writes:
>
> > I think that it is about time that equipped women began to take on some of the ethical questions which a male-dominated culture has produced and dissect and analyze them quite to pieces in a serious fashion. It is time that 'half the human race' had something to say about the nature of its existence. Otherwise - without revised basic thinking - the woman intellectual is likely to find herself trying to draw conclusions

> —moral conclusions— based on acceptance of a social moral superstructure which has never admitted to the equality of women and is therefore immoral itself. As per marriage, as per sexual practices, as per the rearing of children, etc. In this kind of work there may be women to emerge who will be able to formulate a new and possible concept that homosexual persecution and condemnation has at its roots not only social ignorance, but a philosophically active anti-feminist dogma. But that is but a kernel of a speculative embryonic idea improperly introduced here. [Italics mine.]"

Remember that this is Lorraine Hansberry in 1957 -- pre-feminist anything -- who leads us this way for the women's movement.

> "....Hansberry's statement is an amazingly prescient anticipation of what Lesbian-feminist political analysis has actually accomplished during this second wave of the women's movement. It is also amazing because it indicates Hansberry's feminist and Lesbian commitments, which have previously been ignored and which will best be investigated through the Black feminist analysis of Black women's studies. Most amazing of all is that Hansberry was speaking, without knowing it, directly to us."

I'm going to read just one more paragraph, which is the last paragraph of this introduction:

> "To do the work involved in creating Black women's studies requires not only intellectual intensity, but the deepest courage. Ideally, this is passionate and committed research, writing and teaching whose purpose is to question everything. Coldly 'objective' scholarship that changes nothing is not what we strive for. 'Objectivity' is itself an example of the reification of white-male thought. What could be less objective than the totally white-male studies which are still passed off as embodying all of received knowledge? Everything that human beings participate in is ultimately subjective and biased and there is nothing inherently wrong with that. The bias of Black women's studies must simply be towards the kind of knowledge that will save Black women's lives."

MARY WILLIAMS: I want to respond to Florence from the viewpoint of the traditional disciplines. First, let me say just a little bit on something about which I know very little--anthropology. Some exciting things have been going on recently, and I just want to introduce the subject. Talking to anthropologist colleagues, I get the impression that they all went out to do research for lo these many years as men. Now you might realize that there are a lot of women anthropologists, like Margaret Mead, but in spite of that, I gather that a lot of those women were classified (as Kate Millet was in Japan) as honorary men. As researchers, they found out, of course, about what the men were doing. They found out about men's cultures, but they ignored what the women were doing. In the last few years, women anthropologists have been trying to correct this. As a result, there is a whole batch of new information and new knowledge, and anthropology is in an exciting stage of revision right now.

Next, I want to consider biology. There are two reasons why biology should change, should clean up its act. One reason is it ought to be fair to women, but another reason, equally important, is it ought to be fair to biology. That is, if biology, because of its male-centeredness, because of its male-colored glasses, has been neglecting important parts of biology and important insights, then that is a real detriment to biology as a field of knowledge. What I want to do tonight is just

give you a few examples of how male-colored glasses have hurt biology.

I'm sure those of you who have done anything with women's studies have heard about the invisibility of women in history, and as you look in history books you find that, "Gee, that's true. They aren't in there!" It's also true that women have been invisible in evolutionary thinking. When evolutionists talk about the evolution of Homo sapiens, they have asked questions such as, "All right now, why would we have gotten up on two legs instead of also using our arms for locomotion?" "Well, let's see," they have reasoned, "man was a hunter. Now he needed to run after..." In these little evolutionary scenarios (technically called merited explanations) everything is phrased in terms of what the men were doing, what the males were doing. A couple of years ago in a graduate course in philosophy of biology, one of my male students wanted to write a paper on how a particular characteristic could have evolved. I said okay, so he went off and wrote it and brought me a draft. As I looked at it, I could see he was using this man-the-hunter bit: the men were doing this and that, and the reason a particular characteristic would be selected for study was because it would be helpful in such and such a way in the hunting situation. I read through the draft, and as I got to the end of it I said, "You haven't got anything about how this characteristic might have been affecting women." He was black, a consciousness-raised black, and he immediately knew what I was saying. He said, "Oh-oh. Let's see, what were women doing? They were sitting by the fireplace, taking care of the kids, waiting for the man to bring home the bacon." Well, it's now known pretty well (as well as one can know things from this prehistoric time) that in fact women were supplying the majority of the food. It was a prehistoric hunting and gathering culture. In contemporary hunting and gathering cultures, women supply about seventy percent of the food. It may be somewhat more or less, depending on the local environment and such, but it's generally believed that women's gathering provides the majority of the food.

Carl Sagan's book, Dragons of Eden, is very popular and it is rather fun to read if you can keep your hat on. It's called speculations, and it is. He speculates on the evolution of certain characteristics. I got suspicious when I noted this man-the-hunter stuff for about the third time. As I checked through, I found seven places in the book where he discussed the evolution of particular traits; in six of them he used the man-the-hunter bit as explanation. The seventh was about the evolution of the female pelvic size, and he talked mostly about man-the-hunter there too! That's not quite fair, but read this book and see what you think. He was talking there, in his discussion of female pelvic size, about how greater intelligence, a big brain, was being selected for and how that was causing trouble. I think you will see how little he really looked at what was actually going on.

Let me give you an example now from some of the most recent research in professional biology. Last August at the National Biology Meeting in Georgia I heard a paper presented to the evolution society. It was part of a controversy, a very lively controversy in evolutionary biology, about something called group selection. The question is whether you ever have, as a significant force in evolutionary history, two groups such as two species, one selected against the other, such that one dies off and the other wins out and has lots of kids. If so, that would be group selection rather than individual selection. The latter is where one individual dies off and another individual wins out and has lots of kids. It is now generally held that group selection is not a significant factor. In the paper I heard, this guy had found something interesting about toads. (Toads are really very beautiful. Some of them you wouldn't want to change for a frog prince anytime!) Two groups of toads had a kind of interaction which made him conclude, "My God, this is going to be an example of group selection!" He was really excited. He did some experimental work, counted things and such, and wrote a paper. As he delivered the paper, and as I

was sitting there listening to him, I thought there was something strange going on. He was looking at it as if the male toads were operative in selecting who their mates were. Now, it's generally accepted that it is the female that selects who the mate is. In most animals it is usually a female choice situation because the female contributes the bigger egg. The paper I heard turned on the idea that it was a male choice situation, but once you remembered that it was a female choice situation, the group selection idea had nothing to do with it. Nobody would deny that mating is a matter of female choice in toads, and in fact, when I brought it up, he didn't deny it. I'm giving you this as an example of a professional biologist who went against something that is pretty well accepted. He made the mistake, I think, purely unconsciously. He was seeing mating as if it were the way it is in our society, and the way we see it in our society is as a male choice situation.

Let me give you another example of the effect of male bias on professional biologists. This is an example I heard from Estelle Ramey, an endocrinologist at Georgetown University Medical School. She was on a review panel for the National Science Foundation, reading grant proposals for research on endocrines. (Endocrines include the male and female hormones such as estrogen and testosterone.) It is known, of course, that females have fewer heart attacks than males. Even after you take into account the fact that more males are in high-tension positions, it's still true that females have fewer heart attacks than males. Estelle Ramey noticed that there were a lot of proposals for work on estrogens. Some of the proposals were for the effects of estrogen on the circulatory system, research to find out why and how estrogen protects females from heart disease. In fact, she read many proposals on estrogen research but not one for research on testosterone--not a one. "It never occurred to anyone," she said, "that it might not be that estrogen was good for your heart but that testosterone was bad for your heart." She finally decided she was just going to have to do some work on testosterone herself. Her male colleagues were obviously too emotionally involved to do it! That's another example of something male bias has kept us from investigating. Ironically, in this example, male-colored glasses have prevented a better biological understanding of males.

It was mentioned earlier in Florence's paper that experiments in all sorts of fields have often been done exclusively on males. The conclusions drawn from these experiments, however, often claim that the results are true of human beings. I'd like to give you just a couple of examples from biology. If you look on the vitamin bottle in the drug store where it says "minimum daily requirement," you should realize that that means minimum daily requirement for males. In the case of iron, where they have done enough research to know that there is a difference between males and females; the Pharmacopia, which is a book that lists all these things, says minimum daily requirement and gives an amount. Then it says females, and it gives another amount. The conclusion to be drawn from this--the human being is the male; the female is a variation.

Now I want to give one example of a slightly different thing, but again, this is from my perspective as an evolutionary biologist. One of the traits very strongly identified with males is rationality. The opposite trait, emotionality, has been strongly identified with females. In the university structure, as well in our general values, rationality is very strongly supported, whereas emotionality is sneered at. Now in my perspective as an evolutionary biologist, it's clear that emotionality was selected for for a reason. It's there, it's strong, it's important. Rationality was also selected for. It's there, it's strong, it's important. To say that one is "better" than another is to deny that each is there for a reason and that you have to look for what the reasons are so that you can best use those two facilities. They have not investigated the evolutionary implications

of emotionality, this "female" trait.

Now let me give you one more little example of the invisibility of women in evolutionary thinking. There's a common question among evolutionists, biologists and such, as to why males are bigger than females. This is the question of sexual dimorphism, or, why do bodies take two forms? One form is big and the other is small. Of course, in our American way of thinking, bigger means better, so the question of why men are bigger than women has, you know, underlying emotional connotations. I just want to give you one theory about this which I think provides an interesting little counter-balance to the normal way of thinking about it. It is generally or very frequently projected that sexual dimorphism has something to do with sexual selection: the females are selecting bigger males as mates for some reason. There is some evidence along that line, but the question is, why did the females ever start selecting bigger males? What is there about being bigger? You use more calories, you have to get more food. It's bad for you to be bigger! So why were females selecting larger males? This is the answer. In Homo sapiens, the male still grows after the onset of sexual competence. He gets bigger until his final height at age about 20 or so. Now, back in the good old days when people didn't live very long, if you survived from 13 to 20 it meant you were better. You had more fitness genes, you were clever, and you had avoided the lions and tigers and whoever else was out after you. You had been able to get enough food. That fact that you were able to live longer was an indication that you had better fitness genes. A male's size was an indication of how long he had lived. It's a question of how did women know that men were older. Well, one clue that they're older is that they're bigger. Females started selecting the bigger males on the grounds that the bigger ones were generally older and therefore had shown their fitness genes better. As males got genes that increase height, females got genes for making that selection. (This is not to say they consciously made that decision.) Every time a male got a gene that made him a little bigger, even at puberty, then he would be a little bigger all the way along. He would be chosen as a mate more often than another male the same age, who didn't look as old because he was a little smaller. Genes for large size would be fixed, and the average man would be a little bigger than the average woman. I call this the Pinocchio effect: you tell a little lie and you get a little bigger. That is just to give you a different perspective from the ones generally used to explain this particular effect. We can talk throughout the weekend about more of these little biological stories.

JOAN STRAUMANIS: May I add an anecdote to yours, Mary? I read an article in a popular place like National Geographic a few years ago which implied that we need to look at prehistoric archaeology a little bit differently, too. Through the ages people had been trying to figure out what cave drawings are about, trying to figure out why there were all these pictures of women. Some suggested fertility cults, or that men were worshipping women, and in all this there was a lot of projection of current-day attitudes. They noticed that many of the figures were pregnant-looking, and that they were incised on the cave walls over and over again -- the same figures over and over again. Of course, these male archaeologists thought about religious rituals, about all kinds of worshipping activities, and about art as a way of worship. As they counted them, however, they saw that there were nine figures in a row, and it seemed as if at least some of these drawings were made by women in order to count the months of pregnancy, or perhaps to keep track of menstruation. Seen that way, much of the mysticism and lots of the interpretive possibilities are stripped away. We are also presented with some very nice new possibilities. For example, with all the current emphasis on math anxiety, it is interesting to suppose that women invented counting!

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES AND WOMEN'S STUDIES: QUESTIONING ANSWERS AND CREATING QUESTIONS

Diana Grossman Kahn, Oberlin College

I. Women's Studies is Interdisciplinary

What motivated the creation of the area of Women's Studies, the asking of a new and crucial set of questions? I believe it arose with the following basic questions:

1. What the heil is going on here anyway?
2. Why are women second class citizens?
3. What is the nature of women's oppression?
4. How did it come about?
5. What mechanisms perpetuate it?
6. Based upon these answers, how can it be changed?

I believe it is obvious that these questions cannot best be answered by isolated studies, but that a concerted approach is necessary to arrive at a full picture of the situation and its remedies.

The three reasons that I think an interdisciplinary approach is important are:

1. Methods can come to define the province of a discipline, which may leave some important questions without a procedure by means of which they can be answered.

2. Our ability to formulate questions limits the range of answers or knowledge, and

3. Since some issues are studied only in relation to the ongoing family quarrels of separate disciplines, we may have difficulty calling upon them for our teaching and learning needs.

II. Questions and Methods

First, let us look at the relationship between the methods that are used, and the questions addressed. All scholarship, be it scientific or humanistic, is both limited and informed by the questions which are addressed. Every separate discipline provides parameters or limitations as to its proper domain, as well as opportunities. Each discipline is shaped by its history; each has arisen as a field of human activity which attempts to answer a particular set of questions. As the field develops, certain customs and rules arise as to the correct way of arriving at truthful answers to its own special questions. This we call methodology in the social sciences, scholarship in history and literature, and logic in philosophy.

Let us talk hypothetically about a new discipline, "Grockology," which arose when there were so many people curious about questions about the true nature and propensities of grocks, that they joined together in a learned society. Within thirty years it was finally accepted as an academic discipline sufficiently respectable as to be a necessary department for any small liberal arts college. During this period the Grockologists had developed their particular standards for the correct methods of study in Grockology. These methods were very useful in distinguishing true Grockologists from mere interested laypersons, in establishing Grockology as a true discipline belonging in a liberal arts curriculum, and of course amassing true and correct answers to the ancient grock questions.

Young Grockologists were not trained in thinking up new questions that may be relevant to grocks; they were permitted to do that later, "on their own time." First, in order to become real Grockologists, they had to show that they had thoroughly mastered the time-tested answering rituals of Grockology.

Each discipline asks the questions it is best suited to answer. This is of course natural, because if a discipline is not the best source of knowledge about a particular question, then this question ought to be sent off to another discipline. The only difficulty which arises is the temptation to select for study that which our already-developed instruments or criteria are best suited to study --that is, what we have studied before, in the ways in which they have usually been studied before. Or we ask the questions which can be answered by the data which is the most convenient to collect: for example, grocking behavior of college sophomores.

To introduce my second point, I will tell you a story about Gertrude Stein on her death bed. It is said that her brother, Leonard, thinking that perhaps Gertrude in the transcendence of her final hours could share some enlightenment with him, asked her, "Gertrude, what is the answer?" Gertrude is said to have replied, "What is the question?" This little story has always intrigued me. It is of course possible to speculate that Gertrude felt she only had time for one answer to one question, or that if she could summon the strength to answer a question in her condition, it behooved Leonard to at least make the effort to select it. Leaving these possibilities aside, I believe she meant that it would be a significant achievement for a lifetime to have formulated one good question.

I have long ago been convinced, first by John Dewey, and then by my own experience, that we learn what we want to know. My first and clinical mentor, Bruno Bettelheim, taught that in every therapeutic encounter, "the end is in the beginning." Socrates generally answered questions with other questions. Similarly, in scholarship we tend to find what we look for. As teachers, we teach how to formulate questions and how to arrive at answers, i.e., what to look for, and how to know whether we have found it. Our way of formulating a question limits the possible answers we can perceive. For example, in psychology it makes a difference whether we ask, "What are the differences in aggression levels in boys and girls?" or "What differences in aggression levels of girls and boys are found in six different cultures?"

To introduce my third point, I would like you to imagine each separate discipline as a family within the community of scholars. Each family has its special patterns of dealing with things, its special language, and its special customs known only to its initiates. Certain content areas are embedded in particular disciplines as their unique domain. Often the content area is used by that family to illuminate the positions in the ongoing theoretical quarrels of their discipline. This presents difficulties to those of us who are not trained in that discipline. When we need to include that content in our teaching, we may find it obscure in terminology or underlying assumptions.

In my own personal and professional search to find the answers to important questions about women, I have discovered that most studies concerning family power and marriage are the "possession" of the discipline of sociology. These areas are embedded in the responses of sociologists engaged in their ongoing disciplinary dialogues, and framed in terms of their own theoretical squabbles and favored conceptual terms.

For example, I discovered that John Scanzoni's Sexual Bargaining[1] deals with sex roles and negotiation within marriage. This was the most illuminating treatment I had found to aid my students in synthesizing the family power and sex role concepts of sociology with family system concepts of family therapy, so that they could understand how sex role issues were relevant to clinical practice. I discovered as I read Scanzoni that his approach was a departure from another school or conceptual group within sociology.

Scanzoni's team was called "Exchange Theory." I forget what the other team was called. I know about the historic break between Freud and Jung, the irreconcilable differences between Skinnerians and Freudians, and the recent rapprochement between the Humanists and the Behaviorists. However, the history of sociological thought had not been included in my education.

So I had to resort to a consultant, who explained to me the place of exchange theory in the sweep of sociology. I was very grateful for the guidance of my sociologist friend. However, I would have been much more comfortable if I could have had the ongoing stimulation of just such a colleague who could be present in the classroom, and who could inform me as we proceeded how, in using Scanzoni for my own purposes, I had failed to understand him properly; or a colleague who could extend my comments on Scanzoni and relate them to other features from the body of sociological knowledge which would further illuminate the question at hand. This experience reminds me of dropping in unexpectedly on a family engaged in intimate discussion, and feeling that one needs a translator who would spell out the significance of nuances of their conversation to the alien visitor.

In light of these three kinds of difficulties it would seem that the most functional approach to many issues would be problem-focused rather than discipline-focused. This has been suggested by the editor of a recent Daedalus symposium on the future of science. In the future it is predicted that scientists will be organized more in problem-solving groups, with less attention to disciplinary prescriptions, and more regard for the combined range and variety of problem-solving power.

III. Academic Disciplines Study Themselves

How do the enterprises of the knowledge establishment help or hinder the process of answering the basic questions we need to address? That is, as academics are we part of the problem? Following Berger and Luckman's[2] view of the sociology of knowledge, any academic discipline is viewed as a human enterprise which is dependent upon the perception of scholars and the impact of their social reality upon them.

Judith Long Laws has said,

> As the goldfish is unaware that its medium is water and without conscious knowledge of its characteristics, so human individuals are unconscious of the existence and characteristics of the social environment.[3]

This can also be true of the "social environment" of an academic discipline--its customs as to what is worthy of study, and who may study it, as well as how

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[1] Scanzoni, J. Sexual Bargaining. New York: Spectrum, 1973.

[2] Berger, P. and Luckman, T. The Social Construction of Reality. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966.

[3] Laws, J.L. Sexual Scripts. Hinsdale, Illinois: The Dryden Press, 1977.

it is to be accomplished. An important paradox for women's studies, as well as black studies and other area studies, is that we are not aware of what we do not know--that is, there may be issues contained in our very own work whose existence is unknown to us.

It is necessary to have a broad perspective in order to be able to study the biases of a discipline as a human activity. Can a discipline study itself? One discipline studying another may be an improvement, but still does not provide the full picture; part of the function of women's studies is to monitor each discipline as an enterprise. Academic disciplines have a capacity to illuminate one another, and women's studies provides the opportunity to engage in this process. For example, Joan Straumanis' talk at this conference on "Generic 'Man' and Mortal Woman" was a stimulus to examine our use of language. Even those who study literature and language may become so accustomed to the generic "he" and "correct style" that they may unwittingly sacrifice correctness and feminist principles for standard form.

Another example of using the perspectives of one discipline better to apprehend the nature of another is Paul Roazen's study of psychoanalysis, Freud and His Followers.[4] As a political scientist, Roazen is able to view psychoanalysis as an ideological political movement and document their common features. He makes us aware of the political nature of psychoanalysis as an enterprise.

Turning to the major questions about the nature of the oppression of women, how do we best utilize the disciplines to answer these questions? I propose a three-level approach. On the introductory level, an interdisciplinary study involving materials from as many disciplines as possible is likely to give a full picture. Next, the student might choose at least two disciplines and become competent in the theory, methodology, and history of each. Finally, there could be problem-solving on an interdisciplinary level. Once competence has been achieved within disciplines, then the tools are available to answer questions which can arise from a broader perspective.

IV. Some Wholesome Interdisciplinary Experiences I Have Had

I would like to share a few examples of what reaching across disciplines has meant for me personally. In the case of a topic which often occurs in the boundary between psychology and sociology--that is, the relative importance of individual, intrapsychic factors and societal, environmental factors--I was not aware of the many junctures at which I chose the former over the latter by default. A recent review article in psychology asks, "Is there a psychology of women, or only a social psychology of women?" This conceptualization could be very influential in making policies about women. I only understood this in a limited way until I was fortunate to have the opportunity to sit through a sex roles course with a (Marxian) sociologist who presented issue after familiar issue in terms of how changes in the environment, changes in the social structure, would affect the experience of the individual. It was for me an "Aha" experience or "click" of a permanent order.

Some feminists and feminist scholars emphasize the necessity to unify or transcend traditional dichotomies and polarities. How deeply satisfying to feel that one is simultaneously learning in different ways which combine reason and intuition, science and myth, or inner experience and outer behavior. Adrienne Rich's book, Of Women Born[5], unites scientific findings, literature, and personal testi-

[4] Roazen, P. Freud and His Followers. New York: Knopf, 1974.

[5] Rich, A. Of Woman Born. New York: W.W. Norton, 1976.

mony in a way which is beyond the power of any of these things by themselves to describe a phenomenon or to answer a set of questions. She is somehow able to use evidence from many areas, with apparent respect for their correct rules of procedure and familial discourse, and turn it into a meaningful whole. Gerda Lerner, as another example, is a historian-psychologist when she makes the experiences of women forgotten in history accessible to us.

V. An Interdisciplinary Fantasy

I have a fantasy, a dream, a wish. I wish I could gather my friends from different disciplines--from literature, history, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, art, political science, economics, chemistry and biology--and sit down together and say, "Thank you for coming, my friends, to help me with my questions. Here are my questions. Some of them come from my discipline. Some of them come from my life. Some of them come from the axes I like to grind, and some of them come from my hopes."

What can you bring up from the treasures in the coffers and trunks of your discipline to help me answer my questions and your questions and our questions?

GENERIC "MAN" AND MORTAL WOMAN*

Joan Straumanis, Denison University

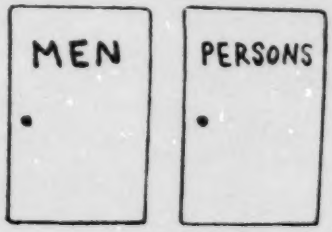
All men are mortal.
Socrates is a man.
Therefore, Socrates is mortal.
Are all women mortal too?

Language is as much an archeological artifact as are potsherds and arrowheads. More than those do, it offers clues to the values of the past, and often preserves intact a record of changing values. Linguistic practices change more slowly than social practices, and sometimes old ideas embedded in words have been forgotten, while the words are still in use. The wide range of present-day attitudes about sex-role liberation has yet to be fully reflected in our language, but some of this confusion and ambivalence is already evident in our speech and writing, perhaps recording for all time our present transitional stage in the sex-role revolution.

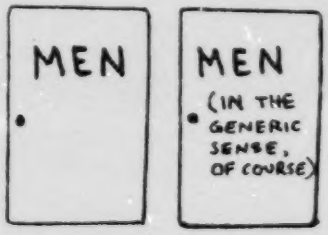
But language structures thought as well as it discloses it. As the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis reminds us, language shapes the range of possible ideas by making some concepts easy to formulate, others difficult or impossible. These facts justify the study of language by those committed to social change, and even open the possibility of deliberate acceleration of the process by the restructuring of language.

What does current linguistic practice disclose? A new genre of bathroom jokes for one thing, jokes that strike to the heart of the new ambivalence. By "bathroom jokes" I do not, of course, refer euphemistically to sexual jokes. I confess they are really no more than bathroom door jokes, of which I will attempt to produce a few:

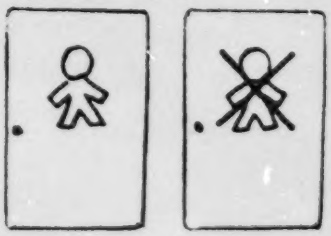
(1)



(2)



(3)



(These doors are not fictitious. They mark the restrooms of the Licking County Memorial Hospital in Newark, Ohio.)

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* Coincidentally, a paper by Janice Moulton, George M. Robinson, and Cherin Elias, containing some similar arguments and a few identical examples, was published in The American Psychologist ("Sex Bias in Language Use," November 1978, pp. 1032-1036). There has been no cross-fertilization between the two papers. Nevertheless, I am grateful to Jon Fuller of GLCA for directing my attention to the paper, and I wish to express my admiration of its authors for their creative approach, especially the use of empirical experiment to test the arguments presented.

Other jokes, less funny, and perhaps less friendly to the new way of speaking involve the coinage of such "mock" words as "penpersonship" and the new name given me by co-workers last year, "Joan Straupersonis." A recent article in TWA Ambassador Magazine condemns what the author, Alfred Friendly, calls "Personipulating the Language" (October, 1978).

My study is a partially-empirical analysis of these and other current linguistic practices, in which I have concentrated on the notion of the generic "man," but also have looked at the use of sex-neutral generic terms to refer to male and female human beings, and looked for any sign of a generic "woman."

Sex Neutral Generic Terms

I shall begin in the middle of this agenda, and demonstrate first how "sex-neutral" terms for groups of human beings often refer exclusively to males in actual use. In the following examples, the explicit addition of terms to refer to females testifies to the exclusion, or at least the invisibility, of females in the original, allegedly generic and sex-neutral, terms:

--From children's books:
"All the people ran down to the beach. The women ran too."
"America was settled by brave pioneers and their wives."

--In the sports pages of college newspapers, we read about the basketball team, and (more and more these days) the women's basketball team.

--My husband and I have recently purchased new bicycle seats. His is stamped "Avocet"; mine is stamped "Women's Avocet."

--From a statement of policy about use of a college guest house: "Those eligible for overnight accommodations are guests of the University.... The wife of an eligible guest may be accommodated, providing space is available."

Since neutral terms such as these so often exclude reference to women, it seems reasonable to suppose that even well-intentioned attempts to use "man," "he," and other putatively ambiguous terms generically are doubly undermined. In fact, truly successful generic uses of any gender-marked terms to refer in English to both females and males are rare. Before turning to an analysis of the masculine terms which are candidates for the role of generic "man," let us see if any feminine candidates exist at all.

The Search for a Generic "Woman"

First, it is important to note a linguistic phenomenon which might be labeled the "sex/value shift." It is the tendency of sex-linked terms to shift in their meanings from preferred or valued referents toward less valued ones, sometimes eventually giving up their original meanings (or, more likely, being abandoned by their original referents).

One may note the time-honored pressure by women (many of them feminists) to convert formerly masculine nouns to new generic uses: Karen Feinberg, an Ohio writer, is typical of recent writers who call their leading female characters heroes (not heroines). Marlo Thomas, a feminist, describes herself as an actor (not actress). Nineteenth century feminist writers insisted upon being called poet (not poetess).

These shifts reflect the evaluation of the masculine as superior to the feminine, or as setting the standard, norm, or paradigm for both sexes. The efforts of such women at linguistic reform are made especially necessary when earlier stages

in the sex/value shift of some terms have rendered the male and female versions distinct, and usually unequal, in meaning and value: A poetess is less talented, less serious, than a poet. A governor rules the government; a governess rules only children. In German, Herr Professor is a professor; but Frau Professor is a professor's wife.

The phenomenon of the sex/value shift characterizes the use of proper names as well. While masculine names are often feminized (or given, intact, to females), the reverse rarely happens. "Gender-neutral" names such as Shirley, Carol, Leslie, and Marion have shifted substantially in our generation and are in process of being wholly abandoned as names for boys, as could be demonstrated by age graphs of males and females bearing these names. I know of only one name shift which reversed this male-to-female pattern: the modification of "Mary" to yield the male forms "Marion" or "Mario." But today "Marion" is losing ground because the force of the sex/value shift has begun to outweigh the positive religious connotations of derivatives of "Mary."

The reality and strength of the sex/value shift renders it unlikely that we will uncover a truly generic "woman." How will we recognize her if she exists? The search will be for a term which falls into one or more of these categories:

1) A feminine noun or pronoun whose use has been shifted or extended to refer to both males and females, or to males only.

2) A feminine term which has been modified by use of a masculine ending to refer to males.

3) A feminine term (or feminine ending) used in a wholly sex-neutral context, or to refer (without personification) to inanimate objects.

4) A neutral term used to refer to women alone, to the exclusion of men (c.f. "the pioneer and his wife").

These are my findings to date:

Category (1): The shift or extension of feminine terms to men appears to be avoided when males enter previously all-female domains, or adopt stereotypically feminine roles. Such terms as "stewardess" and "housewife" seem never to be taken over. Although "nurse" is a gender-neutral term, we usually hear "male nurse" so that gender can be made clear. I can think of one possible exception: Does a male practitioner of midwifery call himself, like Socrates, a "midwife"? If so, we have found our example! "Quick, Mama, call the midwife, or he'll arrive too late to do us any good!"

Another natural candidate, the gender-neutral term "coed" is never applied to men, despite its usefulness and the fact that our language contains no corresponding word for a male student in a coeducational institution. In general, the intense anxiety of men not to be labeled feminine is a near-guarantee that the first category will be empty, or nearly empty, of words with positive connotations.

Of epithets, however, there is no lack: Consider "sissy," "queen," "fairy," "effeminate," and "womanish," all terms which illustrate that the sex/value shift can move in a negative, as well as a positive, direction.

Category (2): Apart from the masculinization of "Mary," already cited, I know of only one clear case in which a female term predates the corresponding male form:

"widow." This reflects the social fact that, while among our ancestors both widows and widowers were probably numerous, only widows, like orphans, were objects of such attention that a special term was required to refer to them. A bereaved husband or parent could resume a normal social role, but a bereaved wife or child was the responsibility of the community.

The interesting word "spinster" might be mentioned in this context. It resembles "widow" in its pitying reference to a "bereaved" woman requiring social attention. While today it has no corresponding masculine form, the reason is that it represents an early casualty to the sex/value shift. "Spinster" is, of course, a masculine term, the feminine version of which is "spinstress." Early on, probably during a period of economic prosperity, the occupation of spinning, along with the term referring to the standard (male) practitioner, was relegated to unmarried females who could thus play an economic role in other people's households. The sex/value shift then continued its move toward less favored referents; in our day the term refers not to any unmarried woman, but only to those who are old, ugly, strange, or uptight.

Category (3): It is easy to find examples of the use of feminine endings in sex-neutral or inanimate contexts: "leatherette" refers to imitation leather; "kitchenette," "dinette," and "roomette" are used for kitchens, dining furniture, and rooms which are small, and perhaps cute as well. It seems clear that the common role of feminine endings is to derogate or diminish. What shall we now say about "suffragette?" (I say, never use it!)

Category (4): Is there a sex-neutral term sometimes used to refer to females alone? Yes, I have found one! Consider the example, "Birds lay eggs; human beings bear their young alive." In this special context, equivocating madly between species and individuals, we may at last have cornered a fragile and neutralized generic "woman." But we have bigger fish to fry: Could we equally have said "man bears his young alive"?

The Generic "Man"

Although attempts to use "man" generically abound, it will turn out that most such uses are defective, and that genuinely non-sexist instances are very rare, if they are possible at all.

A test procedure familiar to philosophers will be employed: the thought experiment. In chemical tests, positive results are signaled by color change in an indicator, for example, or the precipitation of solids. In linguistic tests we look for meaning change, of course, but the surest sign is the precipitation of laughter, the mark of verbal oddity. A truly generic use should sound equally normal whether the subject is male or female. Subjected to such testing, a variety of putative generic uses of masculine terms are found to be asymmetric, exclusionary, honorific, or equivocal.

Asymmetry: It is easy and normal to say "the caveman and his wife"; but if "caveman" is generic, we should equally naturally say "the caveman and her husband." We undertook this section with a test case before us: While it is undoubtedly normal to say that a man is a social animal; he is warm-blooded, omnivorous, and makes his home in any climate, but does he also bear his young alive--and does he suckle him? Most important, is it normal to say so?

Shall we say that we deny rights to no man, regardless of sex? (I have a document, the Constitution of a campus organization, which makes this very declaration.)

If "he" is generic, then we should not be surprised that in Ohio "no person may

require another person to perform, participate in, or undergo an abortion. . . against his will." (Ohio 110th General Assembly, House Bill 302, February 1975) But this wording provoked laughter in the State House, even though males could easily participate in abortions against their will. Apparently the word "his" was objectionable because some of the bill's beneficiaries would be women.

I myself performed the laughter test on the generic "his": I said, "The deadline should be extended for a person like me who can't get his grades in by Friday." Of course I got a laugh.

Exclusionary uses: The above uses of generic masculine terms are quite obviously asymmetric; they are also exclusionary if they cannot be applied in contexts where the referent is known to be female, or the referent group is all-female. But there is a stronger sense of exclusionary. A term is exclusionary in this stronger sense when it refers only to all-male groups or in contexts in which women are unwelcome.

The New York Human Rights Commission brought a case against the Biltmore Hotel Men's Bar, for excluding women. The defense was that the word "men" in the bar's name was intended to be generic. The courts ruled that the name was exclusionary, whatever the intention. There is no way that female customers can feel themselves welcome in a bar so named. Similarly, a sign in a store window that says "Man Wanted" will discourage female applicants, however generically it is intended.

If the Marine Corps advertises that it wants "a few good men" it will get even fewer good women.

As we shall see, this exclusionary effect is hard to control; the words speak for themselves, regardless of their author's intentions.

Honorific uses: When the ancient thrones of Egypt passed by royal succession into the hands of women, part of the official regalia of the queen was a stylized false beard (the tubular structure sometimes seen on the masks and statues of Egyptian queens).

In German, Yiddish, and occasionally, English, "man" is sometimes an evaluative term:

--There's a real mensch!

--Are you man enough for the job? (C.f. the feminist poster slogan: "The best man for the job is often a woman.")

--Of Golda Meir it was said, and is often quoted, that she was chosen Prime Minister because, at the time, she was "the only man in her party."

--I am told by a student that a woman of her acquaintance was honored at a banquet in India where she was declared an "honorary man."

These honorific uses of "man" are related to the sex/value shift phenomenon; one honors or upgrades a female by naming or referring to her as a man.

Equivocation: The most logically and morally serious consequences of the generic use of "man" do not follow from the instances which provoke laughter; they attend the less visible cases which, because they are often entirely overlooked, are liable to slip into equivocation. Within a single context, the uses of "man" may

dissolve back and forth between the generic and masculine senses, sometimes clearly of one sort rather than the other, but often entirely uninterpretable.

A short example should illustrate the problem: In The Sleepwalkers, Arthur Koestler quotes Kepler's opinion of astrology. Kepler says, in part, "[The sky]. . . does not endow man with his habits, history, happiness, children, riches or a wife, but it moulds his condition. . ." (London: Hutchinson 1959, pp. 243-245; emphases supplied).

It has often happened that I have been reading an argument in one way (usually taking "man" as generic), when a hint appears of the alternative sense, throwing my entire understanding into doubt. I begin again and resentfully reconstrue the story or essay to be about men, or addressed exclusively to men. I will cite, without quoting, one serious case for which the complete text is readily available: It is the Papal Encyclical of Pope Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, on the subject of birth control. Although it begins by addressing the officers of the church and "all men of good will" by the salutation, "Venerable brothers and beloved sons," its language is generally amenable to being construed as generic, until passages appear which remove any doubt about who is being addressed: "Man" should avoid "anti-conceptive practices" because he may thereby "finally lose respect for the woman and. . . come to the point of considering her as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment, and no longer as his respected and beloved companion." The female reader sighs, and wonders whether His Holiness had ever been addressing her at all.

As in the case of the Biltmore Men's Bar, the danger of equivocation or misconstrual is entirely out of the author's control, depending, as it does, upon the effect of the language upon the hearer or reader. The slide of the generic "man" into ambiguity cannot be stopped by the speaker without his relinquishing the ambiguous terms.

For example: "Men are naturally territorial" is ambiguous, but even if it is meant generically, notice how that intention is canceled by the next sentence, "Five men in an elevator stake out the territory so as to be as separated as possible." One is left wondering whether women do that also.

One is tempted to study the behavior of other ambiguous terms where the extension of the term under one sense is a subset of the extension under the alternative construal, as is the case here. That is, the reference of the term "man" (meaning adult male) is a subset of the reference of "man" (meaning human being). One such case familiar to logicians is the ordinary word "some." Although we might, as logic textbooks do, stipulate the definition of "some X" so as to have the widest extension ("at least one and maybe all" for count nouns) we cannot prevent the narrower interpretation where the measure of the set X is relatively small.

Compare: "Some Ohioans voted for Carter" or "Some swans are white" with "Some of my children have blue eyes." In only the last of these cases the inevitable interpretation is "some have blue eyes and some do not." Similarly, it becomes nearly impossible to construe "man" generically, to refer to men and/or women, where the context makes it plain that the number of individuals is small (the elevator case).

Evaluation of Counter-Arguments

The article by Alfred Friendly, **referred to on page 26 above,** recites a familiar defense of the generic "man":

> The suffix -person is a needless bastard born of ignorant parents. For several millennia, back to the Sanskrit word manu, -man, man- and the word man standing alone meant person, one, human being, of either sex. They still do. That man has the additional meaning, when used in a different context, of an adult human male is beside the point. In its basic, inclusive sense it corresponds to the German pronoun man, meaning one, a person, and not to the German noun Mann, a grownup human being of the male sex. It is, furthermore, the exact representative of the Latin homo, a member of the human species of either sex, and not vir, the male adult. Homo is related to the Latin humus, meaning human, again without regard to sex.

This position may be likened to the claim that menstruating women should be avoided because the original meaning of the word "taboo," in Tongan, is "menstruation." Although this happens to be true, it provides little guidance for current linguistic practice. Philosophers call the kind of argument used here and by Friendly a genetic fallacy. The idea is that it is fallacious to derive imperatives, particularly those having moral significance, from origins or historical facts. This is a species of the general injunction against attempting to derive an "ought" from an "is"--but in this case it is more aptly described as deriving an "ought' from a "was." The past is indeed a font of information, including information about norms, but norms derived from the past require present and continuous moral justification, fully as much as brand new notions do.

The British philosopher, G.E.M. Anscombe, has advanced a similar etymological argument (private conversation), but, more subtle than Friendly, has added the worry that overuse of "person" will further narrow the reference of "man" so that its sex-neutrality would decrease through the efforts of feminists. The result would be that old literature such as the Bible (her example) would appear to future generations more sexist than it originally was. My reply at the time was on moral grounds, emphasizing the damage done to living women by the generic "man," but admitting that our ability easily to interpret the past might well be a casualty in the long run. But, upon further reflection, I am not so sure that Anscombe's prediction will come true.

Consider the case of "chairperson." It comes as close as any term I have investigated to being a genuinely neutral case of the generic "man." Compare these introductions:

(1) I want you to meet the department chairman; she's right over here.
(No problem--perhaps.)

(2) I want you to meet the perfume salesman; she's right over here.
(One suspects the speaker of deliberately choosing a misleading expression, when a more apt alternative, e.g. "salesperson," is available.)

(3) I want you to meet the gunman; here she is!
(This is definitely manipulative, perhaps even a misuse of language, despite the fact that there is no ready alternative.)

Of all the terms so far examined, "chairman" sounds most naturally applicable to a female, especially in an academic setting, but this is not predicted by Anscombe's account, since the alternatives "chairperson" and "chair" are also in wide use in such settings. The result of this should have been a narrowing of the extension of "chairman," leading to the elimination of its generic sense.

Instead, I submit that the reason for the naturalness of both "chairperson" and the generic "chairman" to us, who use them often, is simply that more women are holding these posts.

So far, the Anscombe worry has been unsupported by events, but in the long run she may be right. Our access to the literature of the past may indeed be compromised by any rapid changes in the language. Only extinct languages are immune to this danger.

Finally, it is necessary to confront the complaint of linguistic "awkwardness," the ultimate fall-back position of the defenders of the generic "man." It is plain that linguistic felicity is a function of familiarity. I have heard English professors call "chairperson" a barbarism, while cheerfully accepting "salesperson," which is just as long, and for all that I can tell, equally "awkward."

It would be unfair to deny that sidestepping the generic "man," and especially, the generic use of "he" is often difficult, and the results are sometimes ungrammatical. The problem is worse in French, for example, where I am told that it cannot be grammatically asserted that the new engineer made her report. "Engineer" is masculine, and even where its use is intended to be generic, both "new" and "her" must agree in gender with the noun, in this case a grammatical impossibility.

But it ought to be easy for philosophers and other ethical literates to do moral battle with those who would rather sin against persons than against grammar.

However, there is something else to be said in defense of awkwardness. It does call attention to context, and can even raise consciousness: Rather than do grammatical headstands to eliminate or avoid first person pronouns, it may sometimes be **educative** to choose to highlight the problem instead. I hope, for example, that each future President will appoint many women to high positions in his or her administration.

Such language expands the realm of real possibilities.

Conclusion

A distinction can be drawn between the sexism of language and the sexism expressed in language, and of course linguistic reform can do little about the latter. For example, the sexism of the exercises in Lemmon's logic book (E.J. Lemmon, Beginning Logic, London: Nelson, 1971), which are built around the motif, "All women are featherbrained," is not an issue in linguistics. But structural sexism is not a trivial issue. Such linguistic practices as the generic use of "man" are not just annoying,and we are not being petty in objecting to them. They turn out to be pernicious, and are contrary to the interests of women and men. Moreover, they represent a lost opportunity for social reform through linguisitic sensitivity.

SEX DIFFERENCES IN CHOICES OF TOY AND MODES OF PLAY IN NURSERY SCHOOL

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A variety of research has dealt with toy choices as indicators of the development of sex-roles in children. Kohlberg has described the process of sex-role development as beginning when the child is first able personally to identify with the label "boy" or "girl." He claims that the child, as a value-seeking organism, will come to value things seen as like or appropriate to self and prefer "sex-appropriate" objects or activities. Social learning theorists like Mischel, however, attribute the process to the child's history of reinforcement for "sex-appropriate" behaviors and punishment for "sex-inappropriate" behaviors, and to the influence of models. It is probably reasonable to assume that both learning and cognition contribute to the development of sex-role identity. A study of toy choices provides an interesting approach to assessing the process of sex-role identification in children from ages three to six. Kohlberg describes these years as the age of development of constant gender categories, during which children focus on cultural rather than genital differences in their understanding of sex differences.

Many studies have shown that specific playthings have a stable hierarchy of sex preference in our culture, across ages and socioeconomic groups. Several tests have been devised to measure sex differences in toy preferences: Brown's IT Scale, in which the child chooses toys for a neutral "it"; Rabban's Toy Preference Scale, in which the child picks six favorite toys from an array of sixteen; and Fauls' PIX Scale, which measures sex-appropriateness of toys and activities presented in photographs. Although these scales were devised at a time when adherence to sex stereotypes was unquestioned as the natural and desirable outcome of socialization, the general methods used and results obtained are of interest to present-day researchers.

Several findings of interest have emerged. First, young children are more strongly sex-stereotyped than adults in their choices of appropriate toys, and they also perceive adults to be strongly stereotyped and active in encouraging children's conformity to sex roles. Boys have been found to be more rigidly stereotyped than girls, and the process seems to begin at a younger age for boys. Familial configurations and socio-economic class seem to be relatively unimportant at these young ages. Significant age differences have been found. Three-year-olds are less aware of sex differences and relatively unstereotyped in toy choices. The percentage of sex-appropriate choices increases with age in preschool and rises sharply when children enter kindergarten. It has been clearly documented that on toy preference tests boys prefer trucks and girls prefer dolls. Both observational and laboratory studies indicate that boys choose to play more aggressively than girls, and that girls choose more passive, fine-motor activities, while boys choose active, large-motor activities. Adults expect to see these differences in both toy choices and play styles in children as young as two years old. Since trucks are generally associated with active, large-motor play, and dolls are played with quietly, it may be reasonable to assume that when a child is presented with a picture of a toy, the choice may be influenced by the child's assumptions about how he/she would play with the toy. The present study makes the mode of play explicit in videotapes of children actually playing together. This procedure yields an assessment of the influence of type of play activity on toy choices.

Thirty children from the Beacon Hill Nursery School in Boston and the Tufts University Day Care Center were tested. In both of these schools, a high value was placed on encouraging androgynous behavior in children. All children were encouraged to participate in all activities, regardless of "sex-appropriateness." Both schools avoided sex stereotyping in books and conversation, and had managed to recruit men, a relative rarity in preschools, as teachers. The "pro-androgyny" policies reflected parental values and interests. That these children became increasingly stereotyped in toy choices or modes of play--in environments which were relatively free of pressures to do so--appears to lend support to Kohlberg's notion that the child is actively constructing his/her sex-role identity.

I had predicted that significant sex differences would not be found between three-year-old boys and girls with regard to preferences for toys or modes of play, but that older children would show sex-stereotypic differences, with preferences being influenced by both toy and mode of play.

Each child was shown twenty second videotape segments, in which a preschool boy and girl played together with dolls or trucks in the following ways:

D_F - (doll-fine motor) Feeding the doll.
D_L - (doll-large motor) Holding the doll by the hands and twirling it.
D_A - (doll-aggressive) Throwing the doll.
T_F - (truck-fine motor) Loading the truck with crayons.
T_L - (truck-large motor) Riding around on the truck.
T_A - (truck-aggressive) Knocking down blocks with the trucks and crashing.

As each child viewed each of the six segments, he/she was shown a photograph corresponding to the segment and was asked to pretend that the children on the tape were friends, and to imagine that he/she was going to play at their house. Each film segment was paired with every other segment in the following way: I said to each child, "If one day they were playing like this (first segment of the first pair of films is shown), and another day they were playing like this (second segment is shown), which day would you like to play with them?" Photos corresponding to both film segments were presented simultaneously, and if the child did not spontaneously indicate a choice by pointing to a photo, I told him/her to point to one. This process was repeated for the remaining fourteen pairs of pictures. The children in this age range, who often have difficulty expressing preferences, readily associated the photographs with the taped segments, and had little difficulty understanding the task and indicating choices.

Sex differences would not be expected to be found for all of the toy-"mode of play" combinations if children's choices were indeed reflecting cultural stereotypes, but only for combinations in which the "sex-appropriateness" of toy and mode of play were both consistent with one or the other sex-role stereotype (D_F, T_L, T_A). No sex differences would be predicted for the combinations in which "sex-appropriateness" of toy and mode of play were in conflict. (D_L, D_A, T_F). This is precisely the pattern of differences found in the four- and five-year-old children, with girls showing a preference for the "Doll-Fine" motor activity and boys showing a preference for the "Truck-Large" motor and "Truck-Aggressive" activities. No significant sex differences were found for the three-year-olds, although three-year-old boys chose trucks more often than dolls.

Noting the failure to find sex differences in choices of the doll, when it was played within a large-motor context, or the truck, when it was played with in a fine-motor context, leads us to consider the possibility that in making the choices in standard toy-choice experiments, children do in fact make assumptions about how the toys will be played with, and these assumptions effect their deci-

sions.

One of the issues I wanted to examine in this study was that of sex differences typically found in aggressive play. I felt that including the large-motor activities might diminish these differences by providing a non-aggressive alternative to passive play for the girls, and a large-motor alternative to aggressive play for the boys. However, the results indicate that the differential preferences for aggressive play were not eliminated for the older children.

Another issue of interest resulting from the study is the apparent failure of home and school to transmit "androgynous" values, since the children increasingly chose "sex-appropriate" toys and activities even in this setting. As Kohlberg claims, the child appears to be actively constructing sex stereotypes at this age, just as he/she is organizing and classifying other information from our culture.

Conversations with and observations of the children who participated in this study also indicate that they were actively seeking cultural means to differentiate the sexes and that they rigidly adhered to differences they perceived, regardless of the behavior of parents and teachers. Furthermore, Joffe has presented evidence that even in nursery schools where androgyny is valued, some sex-stereotyping occurs; and it is not unreasonable to assume that this may also be the case in androgynous homes. Yet since even small children have contact with the larger society, as well as home and school, it would be premature to eliminate learning as a contributor to children's stereotyping of themselves, an issue which needs to be explored. It is nonetheless important for parents and preschool educators to be aware of evidence that, for whatever reasons, some stereotyping may be inevitable in the period of time when a child is actively constructing a sex-role identity. As children mature and their cognitive styles become more flexible and complex, stereotyping might be expected to diminish, especially in androgynous homes and schools.

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WOMEN IN EPIC

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The epic poem has had more status, longer, than any other western literary form, with the possible exception of tragedy. It doesn't matter that hardly anyone reads the poems themselves anymore; they have the power over our minds born of their size, scope, and three-thousand-year-old reputation. Their influence on our culture has been tremendous.

The stories and characters of the most famous epic poems have become a part of our heritage: you can know about the sirens' song without ever reading the Odyssey, or about Achilles' heel without reading the Iliad. If you have heard of The Golden Bough as a collection of magic and mythology, you may not know that it was named for the branch that Aeneas carried as his passport into Hades in the sixth book of the Aeneid. Stories from these three classical epics have been raw material for western art for over twenty centuries--the Odyssey has been rewritten twice in the twentieth century: James Joyce's Ulysses, 1922, and Nikos Kazantzakis' Odyssey: a Modern Sequel, 1958.

The fall of Troy, the adventures of Odysseus, the founding of Rome--these are the themes of classical epic. In the Renaissance revival of the genre, Christian poets like Edmund Spenser and John Milton offered even more amazing subjects: the chivalric triumph of good over evil, and man's fall from God's grace and subsequent redemption. And all of this centers on men.

Who are the women in epic? Who comes first to mind? Probably Helen of Troy from the Iliad, although her actual appearances are few compared to the men who fight over her. And how important is she, after all? She is really only a trophy. Her kidnapping started the war just as the assassination at Sarajevo started World War I. The Greeks were only too glad to have an excuse to attack the rich and decadent city of Troy.

What of the other women in the Iliad? Hecuba, Andromache, Cassandra, helpless sufferers all. There is one episode in the Iliad where a woman wields real power, an episode that supplies the pattern for a scene requisite in nearly every epic that follows: the seduction of the hero which keeps him free from the performance of his duty. In the Iliad it is the goddess Hera who seduces her husband Zeus to keep him from interfering in the war on the Trojan side, for Hera favors the Greeks. She drives the king of the gods so wild with desire that he takes her on the spot, conjuring up instant privacy with a cloud cover, ignoring for several days the clash of armies on the earth below. It is important to point out, though, that Hera is only able to enslave Zeus in this way with the aid of a magic love potion. Whenever a woman gains sexual power over a man in the world of epic, it is only with the help of some outside agency, usually magical.

The women of the Odyssey may be categorized in much the same way as those in the Iliad: woman as prize, woman as sufferer, and woman as temptress who distracts man from duty. The Odyssesy is full of temptresses. There are the sirens, mermaid-like creatures whose magical singing lures men to sail or row their boats full speed into jagged rocks. Then there is Calypso, a sea-witch who tempts Odysseus with immortality, and Circe, a sorceress who inspires such lust in men that they fall completely into her power: she shows her contempt for them by changing them into swine.

Of women who suffer and endure, one of the most famous in literature is Odysseus' wife, Penelope. Married barely a year when her husband goes off to war in Troy, she waits twenty years for his return. After a while, all of the ambitious young nobles of Ithaca gather at Odysseus' house, wanting to marry his wife and take over his treasure along with the kingship of the island. But Penelope refuses to believe that her husband is dead, even though most of the others who fought in Troy came home long ago. She holds the young men at bay with promises and tricks.

Penelope is a strong woman, a worthy mate for wise Odysseus. When he returns and kills the presumptuous suitors, she does not fall fainting into his arms. She is not sure that this sunburnt middle-aged stranger is the husband who left her twenty years before, so she tests him with a secret that only the two of them know. Only then, when he has proven who he is, does she display her love and joy and tremendous relief. She has been the keeper of her husband's honor; that is where her fame lies.

It is interesting, then, to jump some thirty centuries and note what happens to Penelope in the Odyssey: a Modern Sequel. It had already begun to happen in the nineteenth century when the poet Tennyson wrote a monologue for Odysseus back in Ithaca. The hero speaks scornfully:

> It little profits that an idle king,
> By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
> Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
> Unequal laws unto a savage race. . .

Kazantzakis' Odysseus, in the twentieth century, also gives Penelope no praise. This modern Greek poet begins his epic by rewriting the end of the original poem. He turns Penelope into a silly, frightened little housewife who shrinks from her husband's touch, nauseated by the blood he spilled in murdering the treacherous young men. Twenty years of war and travelling have made the hero mighty; twenty years of sitting and weaving have turned his wife into a household drudge.

In Homer's poem, Penelope is the strongest and most admirable of all the human women--only some goddesses surpass her in wisdom and character, only Helen surpasses her in beauty. The men who court her want her husband's power and possessions, of course, but they want her, too. Why is it, then, that modern poets can interpret her as an aging ball and chain, a person of no worth and importance? There must be something in the original conception of Penelope, noble as it makes her seem, that enables later poets to trivialize her. I would suppose that it is this: Homer's Penelope is an ideal wife from a man's point of view, invented by a man of a particular era. Odysseus in the original poem wanted only to get home, to cease his wanderings, so of course he saw his wife as virtuous and lovely; but the modern Odysseus, restless in the spirit of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, aches to travel away again. There is no way that a stay-at-home wife to whom he owes so much could seem beautiful or desirable to him.

Virgil's Aeneid, written to celebrate the Rome of Augustus Caesar through a mythic history, introduces a new category of women in epic. In the Latin poem we meet women who are given responsibilities equal to those of the greatest men--ruling a kingdom, founding a nation, fighting in battle--but women who prove unequal to the task.

First there is Dido, queen of Carthage. She has sworn herself to celibacy in memory of her husband, but when Aeneas and his shipwrecked people land in her territory, Venus softens her heart for Aeneas' sake, and she falls in love with him. Lured by her love and her hospitality, Aeneas lingers in Carthage, when he and all those with him who fled the burning city of Troy ought to be on their

way to fulfill their holy mission. Dido, who cannot bear a moment apart from him, neglects the ruling of her land. After a while, the gods send Mercury down to shame the dawdling hero, and Aeneas gathers his people, prepares his ships, and sails. It is only then that Dido, realizing the sacrilege of breaking her oath and the crime of neglecting her duty, sees herself clearly. She piles all of the gifts that Aeneas has left her into one great heap in the palace yard. Then cursing the Trojan race for generations to come, she climbs to the top of it and falls on her sword as flames rise around her.

When Aeneas escapes from the conquered city, he takes with him Trojan women as well as Trojan men. But these women are not destined to be the mothers of the noble Roman race. When they reach Sicily, the goddess Juno (Hera), who hates Aeneas, fills them with madness so that they try to burn the ships, and Aeneas sadly leaves them behind. Finally, the Trojans reach Latium where they fight the Latins for the land that will be Rome. One of the leaders of the enemy troops is a warrior maiden, Camilla, who kills many men as she darts like lightning over the battlefield. While to kill her would bring honor to any Trojan, she is wary and skillful, and it seems impossible to get the best of her. Then, across the battlefield, she sees a warrior in magnificent armor, flashing with gold, glowing with embroidered silks. Coveting these, she is distracted, and one of the Trojan men who has been stalking her impales her on his spear. At her death, her troops scatter; the luck of the Latins turns, and a Trojan victory is assured.

So if at first it seems that Virgil's women are more fully human than Homer's, it is apparent soon that their humanity is flawed. When fate hands them the same responsibilities it hands to men, they are not able to rise to the challenge. Their natures, seen by the epic poet, are too emotional, too domestic, or at best too prone to vanity.

And so, when the revival of classical learning restored to epic its ancient status, old attitudes revived and classical antifeminism put on its Renaissance dress. For example, in Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queene (though it was written during the reign of Elizabeth Tudor and in hopes of preferment from her) older character patterns reappear: woman as prize, woman as sufferer, woman as temptress, woman as bad queen, and woman as failed warrior.

The beautiful women to be won and the helpless women to be rescued reflect the fairy tale motifs of medieval romance as well as the patterns of classical epic. They also function allegorically. Thus the fairy queen herself, Gloriana, whom Prince Arthur seeks, stands for the glory, the renown, that every warrior hopes to win. She is a double prize, as was Penelope: woman and kingdom, woman and fame.

As in pre-Roman epics, the seductresses in this poem are witches and sorceresses who can take on beautiful shapes. The most virulent of these is Acrasia, who lures young warriors to her Bowre of Blisse to feed her insatiable sensuality. When she has exhausted them she transforms them--like Circe--into swine. Like her earlier counterparts, she holds her power by magic. Then, inviting comparison with Virgil's epic, there are a surprising number of bad queens in Spenser's poem, when you consider that the work is dedicated to Queen Elizabeth: Lucifera, Malecasta, Radigund, weak Belge, to name a few. Some are simply evil; the ones who mean well need help from men.

Britomart, Spenser's warrior maiden, needs no help. She would never, like Virgil's Camilla, be distracted by finery. Her eventual failure as a warrior comes, like Dido's failure as a queen, as a result of falling in love. She sees Artegall, her future husband, in a magic glass and sets out to seek him. Armed with

a magic spear, disguised in armor, she does awesome deeds and performs rescues where men have failed. When she finds her man at last, however, she exchanges her armor for woman's dress and, moping like any lovesick girl, goes home to wait for him to finish his quest and return to her.

Only danger to him restores some of her power to act. She must rescue him from Radigund, the Amazon queen. Britomart kills Radigund, then re-establishes Renaissance right order to the kingdom of the Amazons by giving the power to men. Britomart is not jeopardized by vanity, but her potential androgyny is castrated by love.

Kazantzakis also creates a woman warrior weakened by love. Rala is one of the most dedicated leaders of the Israelite resistance in Egypt, a virgin soldier whose powers are dedicated to freeing her people. But she falls in love with the wandering Odysseus, and can feel soft emotions draining her powers away, making her useless to the cause. She does not tell the hero how she feels. Instead, ashamed of her weakness, she throws herself in front of the advancing Egyptian army, and is tramped to death by their horses. Love is as dangerous to women of action as it is to men.

Action itself, however, is suspect for women in epic. It is seen as even potentially good only in the service of masculine order, as when Britomart dethrones the Amazons. Eve in Milton's Paradise Lost acts to the destruction of mankind. Eve first appears a prized possession, given by God to Adam to be his companion and helper. Her relative status is made clear in the famous line, "He for God only, she for God in him." She loves him and keeps his house; when an angel comes to visit she welcomes him with queenly graciousness, but then sits apart as the heavenly visitor talks with Adam about the proper limits of human knowledge. But Eve has too much spirit to maintain this secondary role. Not content always to be in Adam's shadow, a little bored with his constant supervision, Eve insists that they spend a day working in separate parts of the garden. When she is alone, the serpent tempts her.

The quality through which he approaches her is her need to act as a separate being. He tells her that if she eats the forbidden fruit she will become a goddess, and all creation will worship her wisdom and her beauty. Through independence and ambition, then, she falls for it. Adam follows her, so both must suffer, but Eve must suffer more. To the general curse on mankind is added two more punishments for women: that they shall bring forth children in sorrow, and that they shall submit themselves to be ruled by their husbands.

Woman as sufferer, or as a prize to be won and kept; vain woman too susceptible to emotions to be capable of sustained heroism; woman as sorceress with mysterious power to emasculate the unguarded male: these are stereotypes we still struggle to overcome, archetypes still strong in Kazantzakis' Odyssey. If nobody much reads epics any more, their stories and characters come at us from every side--in modern novels and stories and poems, in painting and sculpture and films. (In the movie, American Graffitti, the little cheerleader who makes her boyfriend stay home from college and marry her transforms him not into a pig, like Circe did, but into an insurance salesman.) Epic poems perpetrate a distorted view of women.

But remember: these poems were written by men for men. The women in them reflect the dreams and nightmares of men: their idealization of nurturing women, their delight in rescuing weak ones from assorted dragons, their fears of the sexual powers of women who tempt them. These dreams amount to a sum of awe, disdain, and misunderstanding. Led astray by appearances, reinforced by stereotyping, people have a hard time seeing that human nature is much the same regardless of sex. I offer epic poetry as one reflection and one source of the larger problem.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION IN ITALY AFTER WORLD WAR II

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(with editorial assistance from Ellen Cantarow)

Some background is needed if one is to understand the development of women's liberation in Italy for the past thirty years. Different traditions, coexisting at least since the end of World War II, have influenced Italian feminism in a unique way -- both ideologically and politically:

Four major traditions have influenced Italians, both socially and politically.

1) Catholicism has been one of the strongest of these, affecting the lives of Italians despite class and socio-economic differences--differences like those resulting from the gap in economic development between the North and the South of the country.

2) The rural, backward life-style of the less-developed parts of the country (especially in the South). Industrialization, internal immigration, and consumerism have all deeply modified this rural, ancient set of values and mores; but these are comparatively recent developments, dating only from the early 1960's. Between Catholicism and rural traditions there is also a link, but only a partial link. In regard to the status of women, however, the link is strongest between Catholic and rural traditions in the similar conception each has of the family. The family is considered the basic social unit, both by Catholicism,[1] and in rural life where the family is often the "clan" and provides in fundamental ways for the survival of individuals.

3) The lay tradition of liberal thought, rooted in the political philosophy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century liberalism provided the theoretical background for the country's reunification, and expressed the weltanschauung of the bourgeoisie until at least the outbreak of World War I.

4) A Marxist tradition has produced many unique developments, both in ideas and in political practice, developments that begin with the writing of Antonio Gramsci and continue with Italian working-class movements from the Resistance to Fascism during World War II, and in politics since that time.

The 1947 Constitution acknowledged women's right to full equality. But both time and the emergence of a strong women's movement were necessary, after World War II, to abolish the discriminatory laws that came out of Fascist gynephobia, and that--especially during the thirties--strengthened traditional, patriarchal Italian culture.

Under Fascism, women suffered many kinds of discrimination. For example, Fascist legislation made women's wages only a fraction of men's--for work of equivalent value. Women were also discriminated against in higher education and in careers like the law. But Fascist gynephobia was at its most virulent in legislation on the family, procreation, and birth control. Particularly in the second half of the thirties, such legislation supported the Fascist economy, which required the confinement of much of the population to the most underdeveloped rural areas, chained to a subsistence economy, with little or no economic, social, or geographical mobility. Fascist propanganda underscored woman's place at home, and her exclusive role as homemaker and bearer of children. Such magazines as the Difesa della razza (The Defence of the Race) ran regular articles about supposed biologi-

[1] Note, for instance, the Church's opposition to the modern State, which comes out of the French Revolution.

cal differences between men and women. The emancipated woman was depicted in comic strips as a slim, sophisticated coquette, smoking and walking her pet dog, while the "true" Italian woman was shown trotting devotedly about her household occupations, pregnant, an infant at her bosom, and two or three more tugging at her skirts. Fascism succeeded in promoting sex-role stereotypes that permeated popular mores and behavior, education, and culture. In everyday life, for the majority of Italian women--particularly for lower-middle-class women--this meant confinement to menial household chores, made still more deadly by general economic hardship. Fascism promoted sexual repression and, above all, a female self-image of inferiority and subordination. A recent film, A Very Odd Day, gives one a keen sense of women's daily lives under Fascism.

If one understands the enormity of women's oppression under Fascism, one might at first find it hard to imagine the significance of women's participation in the Resistance. To understand women's remarkable contribution, one must recall the very important presence of women in labor struggles at the beginning of the century and after World War I, through the years just preceding Fascism. All through the twenties and a large part of the thirties, in those bleak years when the regime seemed to permeate the life of the entire nation, the women who worked in the underground were a small minority. Most of them were working-class, and most were in the Communist Party. In the last stages of the Resistance, women of different classes entered the battle. The newcomers included young, intellectual, middle-class women, some of whom came out of Catholic lay organizations. Women participated in significant numbers, both in the fighting partisan units in the North and in underground groups in the cities of Central and Northern Italy. The extent of their activities is indicated by the sizeable number of women who were imprisoned, tortured, executed, or deported by the Nazi-Fascist forces.

Their participation in the Resistance marks the start of Italian women's political involvement after the end of the war. Not only did women join the political parties that had been emerging since the Resistance; women also entered the social and political arena, in order to offer their contribution to solving the many dramatic problems the country faced at the end of the war. Among these was that issue which affected women the most--winning equality and the kind of personal freedoms that the masses of women had never enjoyed. In 1944, even before the end of the war, in Rome after the liberation from the Nazi-Fascist occupation, two major women's organizations came into being. One, affiliated with the parties of the Left, openly stated that its purpose was the pursuit of women's emancipation. The second, formed by Catholic women, proposed that women participate in both social and political activities. Of course this also implied dealing with issues which would affect women's status. The first organization called itself Unione Donne Italiane (Union of Italian Women, UDI); the second, Centro Italiano Femminile (The Italian Women's Center). In the first organization two traditions of emancipation merged, traditions stretching back to the beginning of the century. Italy, like all other European countries, had witnessed the rise of both feminism and workers' struggles for emancipation, along with a Socialist Party.[2] From 1945, a decisive contribution to the formation of the UDI was that of women in the Communist Party. Their involvement was fostered by the personal convictions of the Party's major leader, Togliatti. Togliatti felt that women's emancipation was a problem that cut across class lines, and that the unfolding of emancipation would be an indispensable feature of the new Italian democracy.

Women participated massively in Italian social and political life in the years following the war. This striking involvement must be placed within the peculiar con-

[2] The degree to which the Socialist Party at the beginning of the century supported feminism is a controversial issue.

text of post-war Italy. The country was profoundly affected by the Resistance, which was a truly popular movement whose leading protagonists were the working class and workers' political organizations. One can measure the extent of women's participation in the Resistance by the remarkable number of women who were elected to the Italian Parliament. Most were Communists, but some of the women were Christian Democrats and Socialists. Women also took part in the struggles not only of the industrialized and more politically-aware North, but also of the more rural South. They had an impact in big cities like Rome, Naples, and Palermo where mass political involvement had had no historic precedent before Fascism.

Because of the strong historical link with the working-class movement, the women's movement in Italy set itself to work on broad social issues, concentrating first on meeting the needs of working women--that is, women working both in the home and in paid jobs outside. The legislation advocated by the post-war women's movement dealt with such issues as "equal pay for equal work" (the law was passed and put into practice in collective bargaining at the beginning of the sixties), and with building a support system for working mothers. In connection with this support system, a set of laws was passed forbidding employers to fire women who married or became pregnant. Later legislation was based on the "social value of motherhood." This notion hinged on the idea that women's basic rights—rights like the right to work and to have economic independence—should not be infringed upon because of women's capacity to bear children.

Because working women were mobilized by the movement, and because the unions' support was also enlisted, and because of mass pressure on Parliament, as early as 1950 a law was passed that provided for paid maternity leave. The law was revised in 1971. It now provides, under the national health care system, for a five-month leave— two before the birth of the child and three after—at eighty percent pay, for all working women. (This holds true whether women work in industry, in civil service, in white-collar jobs, in teaching, or in any other area of employment.) The latest revision in maternity-leave legislation provides similar benefits for self-employed women (farmers, shopkeepers) and for domestic workers. The revisions also impose strict health and safety regulations to protect pregnant women in the workplace.

The concept of "the social value of motherhood" also fueled a drive for kindergartens and day-care centers--a drive beginning in the late fifties and continuing through the sixties. In 1968 kindergartens (for children from three to six) came to be part of the educational system. These are run either by the State, by townships, or by private institutions. Public expenditure is the program's most controversial feature. The system has expanded remarkably over the past ten years, in spite of much criticism of the kindergarten hours, which often do not meet working women's needs.

Day-care for children from three months to three years of age was finally established in 1971, after a ten-year struggle on the part of the women's movement. This struggle saw a turning point when unions finally demonstrated their support by calling for partial strikes in key factories where many women were employed. The day-care program is still getting under way, delayed in part by the red tape that surrounds financing, and in part by the rising costs of inflation. But the system now provides more than a mere token solution in large cities like Turin, Milan, and Rome. While far from satisfactory, it may nevertheless be considered an important victory. Both philosophically and practically it is a step towards shifting the burdens of childrearing and domestic work from the shoulders of individual women to the society as a whole.

While tackling such issues, the women's movement spent a great deal of time, from

the late fifties on, changing and repealing discriminatory laws--laws on the books of the Civil and Criminal Codes since Fascism. For instance, in 1963 a law was passed that abolished Fascist bans on women's right to pursue any career, including the law. Since then the number of women judges has grown slowly but steadily.

Only in the mid-sixties, however, did the women's movement start more forthrightly to explore relationships between men and women. Resistance in this area was bound to be greater than any previously encountered by the women's movement, since changes in men's and women's relationships involved discussion of such fundamental and intimate issues as marriage, the family, and childbearing and rearing.

The focal issue during the second half of the sixties was the reform of marriage and family law. The major provisions of the Civil Code in this area went back to the Napoleonic Code of the early nineteenth century, with even more restrictive clauses that had been added in the thirties. The Criminal Code treated matters like adultery and procreation with a mixture of paternalism and Fascist gynephobia. It contained such provisions as:

- A ban on disseminating birth control information. Propogating birth control information was a crime under Fascism, under the law which penalized abortion as a crime "against the integrity and the health of the race."
- A discriminatory assessment of adultery, according to whether it was committed by the husband or the wife, and favoring the husband.
- The protection of the so-called "crime of passion," by which the homicide of the spouse, or of the daughter by her father, or of the sister by her brother was considered a kind of second-class homicide if the murderer could prove a serious offense to his or her "honor." Here again, however, the husband's honor was described in the law as much more "sensitive" than the wife's! (Many will remember, in connection with this subject, the film by Pietro Germi, Divorce--Italian Style, which belongs to the period of the sixties and fits into the debate that was going on in those years.)
- The so-called "marriage of reparation" in which a man who had raped a woman would be acquitted before the law, if he was in a position to marry his victim and she would consent to the marriage. Needless to say, the pressure put upon the victim by a sexually repressive environment was such that, under the circumstances, she was practically compelled to accept. Headlines were made in 1967, however, when a Sicilian girl, Franca Viola, refused to marry the boy who had raped her, and instead, with the backing of her family, brought him into court. Of course, the removal of a rape offense by the victim's marriage had not been in force for a long time in Italian society. Still, judges ruled by it whenever the social and cultural climate demanded it (mainly in the rural and backward area of Southern Italy). But most important, the mere persistence of such provisions in the law enforced women's oppression by patriarchy.

Since the sixties, major changes have taken place both in women's self-awareness and in legislation affecting women's status in Italy. Women's legislative victories are impressive. In 1970 the law was passed that permits divorce. It must be said, however, that this was not a battle only fought by women. The movement for divorce was very broad and included practically all political and cultural forces, with the exception of the Catholic Church, the Christian Democratic Party, and the extreme right wing neo-Fascists. The significance of the divorce law is that it represented the first break with Italy's regressive family legislation. After the divorce law was passed, it was clearly absurd to maintain other legisla-

cion that supported sex-role discrimination. The women's movement saw the breach that had been opened and set about making it wider. At the end of 1973, Parliament voted in a reform of family laws, a reform preceded by years of debate promoted by the women's movement and accompanied by creative and lively mass women's demonstrations around the country. The new law does away with the concept of the man as "head of the family." It provides for the full legal rights of children born outside of marriage. It also stipulates that the housewife share equally in family property, and thus it acknowledges the contribution represented by her domestic work.

The women's movement underwent a transformation during the same period: it no longer aimed to change society in general, but, more precisely, to change male chauvinist patriarchal society. The growth of consciousness at the beginning of the seventies was marked by the birth, in Italy as elsewhere in Europe and the Western world, of feminist groups. These were the years when women started to raise the questions both of birth control and of abortion.

In 1971 the Fascist ban on birth control information was overturned by a judicial decree of the Constitutional Court. Those of us in the women's movement claimed, however, that what was needed was specific legislative action to encourage public birth control education and to provide women free access to birth control devices. Finally, a law was passed in 1975 under which regional governments are funded to set up a public network of family planning centers. The purpose of the centers is to give sound information on sex and birth control. One of the most interesting features of this program is a requirement that the center's activities, its mode of operation and so on, be discussed by a citizens' committee, and that its board be elected by the community. A specific provision stipulates that the citizens' committees should avail themselves of the presence and cooperation of women's organizations and groups in the area.

On June 6, 1978, after three full years of activities and demonstrations, an abortion law was passed. It provides for legal abortion on demand within the first ninety days of pregnancy. Under the law abortions must be performed in public or private hospitals that have made specific arrangements with the regional health administration. Abortion is free of charge. A woman must present a certificate stating that she wants an abortion. The certificate is approved by her private doctor, by a family planning center, or by the hospital itself.

To complete the list of the past ten years' achievements, there is the Equal Opportunity Law of December, 1977. Among other clauses intended to prevent discrimination in respect to women's access to the job market, the Equal Opportunity Law includes a provision whereby a working father may take an unpaid leave of absence to stay with a sick child under one year of age. (Before this, such leave had been granted only to working mothers.)

Despite these acheivements, the present situation is still full of complexities. I will mention only a few of the difficulties.

The majority of women still do not think of themselves as having any right to a sexuality separate from motherhood. (I never spoke about sex with my mother, and she never brought the subject up with me. This was typical of my generation.) The situation is already quite different among the young, especially in the metropolitan areas. One sees proof of these things in the fact that contraceptives are little used except by young women, particularly those living in the cities. It is generally agreed that fewer than ten percent of the women use any scientific method of contraception. However, this situation is likely to improve because of the establishment of consultori (community health centers). Women going

to consultori begin by talking about general gynecological concerns. From there they often go on naturally to matters of sexuality and contraception.

The whole problem of sexual relations, as it reflects the general problem of relations between men and women, was brought out in the battle over the abortion law. The main issue in the struggle was the right of women to decide for themselves when to have an abortion. This insistence on the woman's right to decide has met with the greatest resistance from doctors, who have seen it as a challenge to their traditional power over the bodies and even personalities of women. Behind the "conscientious objection" many doctors have made to abortion lies the fear that women will begin to make their own decisions in matters of procreation.

All issues surrounding maternity--whether they have to do with contraception, birth, or abortion--are still considered very private issues that concern only women. But over the last few years there has been progress in this area. Until a few years ago, a woman would never have had the help of any man, whether her husband or her lover, in facing abortion. But today we have seen even in our own headquarters a change in this regard. Since the abortion law was passed, many couples--young and not-so-young, married and unmarried--have come to get information about hospitals in which it is possible to have an abortion. (While we were occupying clinics to make them live up to the law, we often had the full cooperation of men, who brought food and took care of children during the day.) This sharing of responsibility is one of the ways to raise consciousness about men's responsibility in matters of contraception. After all, the women's movement is not fighting for the right to have abortion. but for the elimination of the need for abortion. The first step is to take abortion out of the back alleys. But the second step--and one that must be taken at the same time--is to give women self-respect with regard to their sexuality, and to advance the possibility of male contraception, an idea only beginning to be talked about.

In the last two or three years, women have begun to denounce rape. In some cases, the women's movement has held massive demonstrations to support victims of rape. It has packed courtrooms with sympathizers. We hope that this will encourage increasing numbers of women to reveal that they have been rape victims. Recently we have been seeking legal reforms that would make penalties for rape more severe, and would give women more courage to step forward in their own defense. But we have asked ourselves whether this is part of the reaction of male chauvinism against the rising force of the women's rights movement.

Just as maternity is still the domain of the woman, so also are the household and the children still seen as her responsibilities alone. This too is changing among young couples, but slowly. The traditional division of roles in the family and in society is still silently and generally accepted, even if men do not stand up and defend it as much as they used to. Nonetheless, any discussion about changing sex roles produces strong male reaction ranging from mockery to rage. This occurs even among men whom one might otherwise consider progressive, liberal, or even radical. When society in the abstract was blamed for women's position, we more easily found allies among men. But from the moment that male chauvinism is cited as something more or less rooted in male psychology, women's struggles arouse negative reactions even in the most progressive of men. The charge that is usually brought against the women's movement in these cases is that women are in danger of becoming simply egotistical, self-serving, narrowly concerned with their own power and not with broader social change. The answer that most of us in the movement give is that in any process of social change there must be an ongoing change in the relationship between men and women.

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Closing Panel: THE FEMINIST CRITIQUE: PLANS AND PROSPECTS

Members of the panel: Rita Kipp, Kenyon, chairperson of the GLCA Women's Studies Committee; Paul Lauter, SUNY/College at Old Westbury; and Joan Straumanis, Denison.

RITA KIPP: The thoughts I am going to present germinated last year at Denison at a GLCA workshop on "Women's Studies Curriculum." Starting there, I want to take you with me through the intellectual steps that brought me to the conclusion I will reach shortly.

The first intellectual step is that feminism, as a body of criticism in academe, is firmly within, not opposed to, the goals of liberal education. I first thought about that when Alice Shrock from Earlham spoke as part of a panel at that Denison workshop. She quoted Daniel Bell, whose book, The Reforming of General Education, sets out six goals of liberal education. Alice pointed out that all of these goals are compatible with women's studies. Today I want to focus on only two of the goals Alice cited, goals which express the necessity of being skeptical or critical.

The first goal is that liberal education should show students how ideas relate to social structures. That is, a liberally educated person should gain an appreciation of how political ideologies, or value judgments about the worth of art or literature, or scientific theories, or any other kinds of ideas, are inseparable from the social structures in which their authors or creators lived. Although feminism is not the only means by which one can perceive this relationship between idea and social structure, the impact of the feminist critique in almost every discipline has been to increase our awareness of this relationship. In my own discipline, for example, anthropologists have come to see that many of our previous conclusions and theories contained implicit assumptions about the sexes. These implicit biases not only colored our collection of data on living human societies, where we assumed that, of course, males will be dominant, and, of course, male activities are the most important ones to study; but these assumptions also colored our reconstruction of what happened in prehistory and even our observations of nonhuman primates. We have truly recreated chimps and baboons in our own image, or, really, to be more precise, in the image of "man." (I was amused to hear Mary Williams in the Opening Panel describe how toads, too, have been recreated in the image of "man.") Similar realizations have occurred in other fields -- psychology, literature, history -- where feminist critiques have revitalized scholarship by pointing out the previously unexamined biases and assumptions we bring into our studies as a result of living in certain kinds of social structures -- racist societies, male dominated societies, heirarchical power structures, capitalist economies, or whatever.

This first goal of liberal education -- to point out the relationship between ideas and social structure -- is closely related to what Daniel Bell describes as the second goal of liberal education: to alert students to the way values infuse all inquiry. Again, although it is not the only way to accomplish this, the feminist critique in any discipline is an excellent way to perceive that no academic or scientific endeavor is entirely objective and value-free. History is not so much a record of what happened as an interpretation of what happened. Science is propelled, not only by those theoretical paradigms Thomas Kuhn has described (which are, one might say, only sophisticated biases), but also by the political context in which scientific research proceeds (and is funded), as countless examples could show. Feminist critiques in art and literature can point out that women are too often absent from the roster of the famous, not only because women traditionally have had less education, opportunity, and encouragement to create art, but also because when they did create, it was not recognized as art. Their work did not fit the then current values of what was "good."

Thus, the feminist critique is clearly compatible with these two closely related goals of liberal education -- to learn the relationship of ideas and social structures and to learn that no form of knowledge is value-free. Ann Fitzgerald, again at the same workshop on curriculum at which I first thought about women's studies as liberal education, spoke of these same issues in a speech that was reprinted in the GLCA Faculty Newsletter (March 27, 1978). I would like to quote part of what she said as a summary of what I have said so far:

> Women's studies confronts head-on the two shibboleths of the traditional curriculum: disciplinary specialization and a political objective knowledge. Women's studies, in contrast, is necessarily interdisciplinary and frankly political. It is problem-centered, and it challenges the ways in which social structures (the curriculum very much included) create and foster ideas about ourselves and the world. In acknowledging the male-centeredness of the traditional curriculum it points out the biases inherent in all the disciplines and thus the political nature of education itself.

This is what feminist critiques have done and this is what this conference was about in part. But what about the prospects of this critique in the future? Here is the second intellectual step toward my conclusion. One of our most interesting prospects (and I am going to suggest that we make it a plan) is that the lessons of the feminist critique can be fruitfully applied to the feminist critique itself. Feminist theories and scholarship should not escape the same scrutiny and skepticism they bring to bear on other knowledge.

Let us consider the application of the first lesson in criticism -- to perceive ideas in their relationship to social structure. Feminism, too, as an idea or an ideology, is a product of a social sttucture or, perhaps, the changes in a social structure. Our intellectual revisions, this feminist critique, have an inseparable tie to the social movement, and that social movement is, in turn, only comprehensible if we consider other "structural" conditions such as industrialization, greater numbers of women in the labor market, and a falling birth rate.

To point to the obvious connections between the feminist critique and the social structure, or the historical moment which gave rise to it, is to raise the question of whether these critiques are ephemeral, merely a passing political fad. Is the feminist critique doomed to extinction as our social structures change and as one historical era fades into another? Yes and no. Well, that is to say, at any rate I hope feminism as a social movement and a separate body of critique in academe may someday disappear. (I am taking what appears to be the minority position here. Among the alternatives outlined by Joan Straumanis in the Opening Panel, I am going to argue for the "therapeutic" view of women's studies.) But to imagine the feminist critique disappearing is not necessarily pessimistic. I have a certain vision of how it should happen. I like to imagine Feminism as a lovely old woman with a strong and wizened face, dying peacefully and gracefully, having accomplished her purpose in life. I hope that Feminism, when she dies, will go contentedly, leaving behind her an offspring which both replaces and incorporates her and so makes her immortal. Her offspring will be a truly androgynous child whom we may name Humanism. (I said "androgynous," but I must admit that when I imagine this child I see Humanism as a daughter, but that just shows you my feminist bias.) I don't think this peaceful death-birth is going to happen soon, mind you. Although the child, Humanism, is already long conceived, Feminism may be in for a rather extended pregnancy. We shall see. The point of this vision is that when we do critically examine feminism as an idea related to a social structure in an historical moment, we envision the possibility of the end of feminism. I am only concerned that that end comes about in the way we want, with the hoped-for results.

As for the second lesson of liberal education -- that all inquiry is infused with value -- at least feminist critiques and feminist scholarship are refreshingly unabashed about their values and political goals. The biases of feminism are not insidiously implicit, but are, let us say, assertively explicit, which is one reason we sometimes appear so threatening to the traditionalists. The traditional pursuit of knowledge is enacted like a great costume ball: everyone wears elaborate masks of objectivity, hiding their biases even from themselves. At the masked ball, we have dared to expose our bare faces. But does our being so frank about

our biases and values exempt feminist scholarship from the pursuit of objectivity? It shouldn't so exempt us. Nor does it exempt us from responding to the criticism from others (or among ourselves) that some feminist scholarship is banefully biased.

It is not easy to apply these two lessons of feminist criticism to feminism itself. Seeing feminism as ephemeral in a social context -- not so much Truth with a capital T, but merely one set of biases that replaces an older set -- is unsettling. The very ground beneath us begins to shake. I remember the drive home from this conference last year when some of us in the van drifted into a conversation such as this. We perceived the awesome idea that the Truth of feminism was perhaps not real, but was only apparent -- to us and to others who share our feminist hopes. A silent moment of reflection engulfed us, and then one of the students said, "But we are right, aren't we?" Relieved, we all laughed and agreed that, yes, of course we were right!

And we are, you know. But it is good for us to stop and think about it once in awhile. It is good for us to turn the same critical mirror to our faces that we hold up so arrogantly to the rest of the academic world. In fact, I will argue that if indeed Feminism, that noble woman, is to survive to a natural death and leave behind her hoped-for child, we nave to be self-critical and receptive to critcism from without and within. I am preaching to myself here, and I will make a personal confession.

I am sure many of you, especially those in the social sciences, share my admiration for Alice Rossi, a sociologist whose essay, "Equality between the Sexes: An Immodest Proposal," written in 1964 and since reprinted, has inspired many a budding feminist. I regarded Alice Rossi as a prototypical feminist-scholar, a role model in the best sense. Perhaps many of you reacted as I did when, a few years ago, she began to write articles that, at first, I summarily dismissed as "backlash." She is suggesting now that there is an inviolate biological substratum of maleness and femaleness that resists modification, and that our traditional values about mothering and family structure were not so wrong as feminism had led us to think. "Oh, NO!" I reacted. There's one Alice who doesn't live here anymore, I thought, and wherever she has gone, I'm not going to go with her.

That was my first thought. My second thought was, I should be grateful for the challenge. If anyone else had written those things, I would not have given them a second thought. Reservations, or critcisms, coming from Alice Rossi, give one pause. And in that critical pause, I once more became receptive to rethinking. I must reexamine the data, my convictions, and previous conclusions on these issues. That is not to say I already agree with her. I may, like Robert Frost emerging on the other side of a dark forest, come out of this reexamination "only more sure of all I thought was true." But maybe I will be less sure. Maybe I will be forced to revise, modify, respond because of her critique.

Now let us consider critcism from the opposite vantage. What is our responsibility as feminists and also scholars when we encounter feminist scholarship which, however much we accept and are in sympathy with the feminist values of the author, we feel to be poor scholarship? In my own discipline, certain writers who have much popular appeal and a wide readership outside anthropology, have used the rubric of anthropological science to argue that matriarchy was the original condition of human society. As much as I can see the political utility of such an idea for arguing that women today should be more powerful, I cannot accept the evidence presented. Here, I am the feminist with reservations, the one who is critical of the feminist critique. (Did you notice that what I call "backlash" in Alice Rossi seems, in myself, to be only reasonable scholarly discretion?)

Call it what you will, but all of us, as feminists, should encourage an atmosphere in which we can voice our criticisms of feminist work and in which we can be responsibe to criticism. Perhaps that seems risky, considering that our ground, such as it is, was so hard-won and only so recently. But the alternative -- to be unhearing, unyielding, unthinking -- will be, I fear, to hasten a premature and untimely death of Feminism. (And I imagine the obituary would list the cause of death as hardening of the arteries.) If we dismiss criticism as "backlash," or if we are afraid to voice our own critiques of feminism out of the fear that others will consider us reactionary, feminism will become as dogmatic and crusty as the very structures we are now trying to change.

Still speaking of the feminist critique and its prospects, however, let me end on an optimistic note. When I spoke earlier of the relationship of ideas to social structures, I implied that ideas such as scientific theories or feminist ideology, and so forth, were products of social structures. And they are, but not passively so. Any idea such as feminism is in a dialectical relationship, a reciprocal relationship with social structures. That is to say, feminism, as an ideology, not only arises out of social structures, it can also transform those structures. Feminism has already begun to transform our society, our academic disciplines, and our colleges. What I have tried to say today is that our further success, our ability to remain an effective critique in academe, depends on our being effectively self-critical and responsible to criticism. In this way, feminism, aimed at no less than the restructuring of society, will remain a vital idea until the day (and may it come soon) when an explicitly feminist critique can die a natural death, immortalized in a new social structure, a new world, of sexual, racial, and economic equality.

PAUL LAUTER: It's rather nice to have the opportunity of talking in a session like this which, as you will see shortly, will illustrate that difference, dialectic, and disharmony are useful for growth, and that there are some rather different viewpoints on the subjects being raised this morning. Feminism, from my point of view, is an ideology designed

to change society. The idea, after all, is not to describe the world but to change it -- including college. Anybody who thinks that feminism can be integrated into the university and the college organization in anything like the way these exist today is deluding herself or himself, in my judgment. Let me try to say why.

I speak particularly in a context in which people are going home probably feeling pretty high: it was a good conference, people learned a lot and have had a chance to exchange ideas. And now you go back to face situations of disagreement, of resistance, of hostility, of oppression -- of classes that omit women and of teachers who take advantage of their female students, of lack of facilities and all sorts of other horrors. This is true of faculty and true of students. We come here where, in many ways, it is comfortable and we can say things to each other we might not want to say elsewere; and then we go there, where it's not quite so comfortable all the time. While we are here, it is easy to think, "Well, isn't it all obvious -- if we could only get all those folks to come here and listen to what goes on and participate in these panels and in the discussions...well, it would all work out, because they are committed to liberal education... aren't they? They are committed to critical inquiry and to coming to rational conclusions. And if we would only tell them, if we could only communicate, it would all fall into place."

That reminds me of the theory that some people went by at the beginning of the Vietnam war teach-ins, when some people said, "All we have to do is explain it. We just need to analyze the situation and talk about the history of Vietnam and show that the Vietnamese based their Declaration of Independence on that of the United States, and really they want a democratic revolution. And if we can only show how the governments of Diem and all of the rest of those types are really very oppressive, and so forth and so on, and explain that to the Kennedy administration and the Johnson administration and the Nixon administration and all the rest of those folks -- and explain that to them rationally -- they'll understand. They are, after all, people who have been trained in our colleges and universities for critical inquiry and they will see the error of their ways and end the war." Only it wasn't an "error," and they didn't see it. Because the policy that they had was rooted in conceptions of interest -- of self interest, of class interest, of national interest. So the response to our logic and our arguments and our essays and our discoveries about the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence -- the response to all of that was escalation of the war. And it took thousands of Vietnamese deaths and a protracted military struggle carried out by the Vietnamese -- not to speak of the disruption of U.S. society, and the disruption of U.S. campuses from Jackson State to Kent State and elsewhere -- to end that war. Not, unfortunately, conferences and rationality.

I would argue that patriarchy -- sexism in academe and in the world at large -- is similarly not an "error." It is an expression of personal momentum and of self-interest, and it is also an expression of social organization and of social structures that exist. Now because these colleges we've come from are "genteel" colleges, when we go back to those campuses what we meet, at least on some level, is a certain verbal assent, a kind of modicum of superficial change, and people say, "Yes, yes, yes, we really do have somehow to include women in the curriculum; we do have to deal with that problem," they say, "and there really should not be professors who take advantage of their students and -- that's true, we've got to deal with that somehow or another." So you hear that genteel verbal assent. But you also have to deal with the fact that colleges are the most recalcitrant among the many industries of the United States today with respect to discrimination on the basis of sex. Even United States Steel is better than most colleges or universities in this respect, and the reason that Title IX was passed and imposed on educational institutions in the United States is because they weren't doing their job and were resisting it tooth and nail -- and still are, still are.

I want to draw an analogy to a closely related issue, that of admissions. I was as shocked I think as other people were to discover that there were only thirty-four black students, or perhaps thirty-six or thirty-two, in one GLCA college. When one examines the question of admissions from the perspective of black students, for example, it is really a question of access to education, access to the tools of knowledge and power. When one pushes for the inclusion of women in history and literature, or for an understanding of women in history and literature, even that much -- or when one pushes for just access, even just admission, as it were, to the college, to the curriculum -- one meets resistance. One meets hostility, one meets political attack, one meets firings, one meets problems of keeping your job, and one meets the explanation (if you're a faculty member) that "you're not sticking to what the discipline demands of you to get ahead." It is very hard to predict where the resistance will emerge, but it will; it always does. Because as you begin to penetrate the surface of gentility and the surface of rationality, you encounter very, very hard-fixed and long-term structures and long-term personal interests, you meet serious resistance.

I want to speak about that in a moment, but first I want to say that the only way to deal with that encounter with political opposition is to anticipate it and then to organize. I was saying that the motto of this talk this morning is "Don't kvetch, organize." And I'm quite serious about that. Organization, as I think everybody here who has had any experience with it knows, is the key to change. One person out there alone can accomplish very, very little, in point of fact, unless that person manages to gather around himself or herself others -- or unless people begin to come together in

some way. And it is never too late; one of the things that you hear all the time is, "Oh well, they've got it together and if we don't have it by now, well it's too late, it's too far down the road." Don't believe that for a moment. It is never too far down the road; and circumstances change. Organization is critical.

Even so, one will meet conflict. And interestingly, one will meet conflict in excess, I think, of what the institutional collegiate context would suggest. The conflict goes deeper. It is on this issue, I think, that some of us here really differ about the character of what we are into. Because I don't believe that feminism is firmly within the context of liberal education. Quite the contrary. I don't think that liberal education -- as it is practiced in fact in colleges and universities -- is interested in changing the world, but rather is interested in preserving the world pretty much the way it is, with some modification. And if you don't believe that, look at the history of colleges -- that's one of the things we have to look at, that history that is screened. In the United States, where did the disciplines come from, for example, in practical terms? They came out of Johns Hopkins University, as Florence's speech suggested. Where did Johns Hopkins come from? Well, the money came from sources not all that different from those which provided funds for the black colleges in the South run by Booker T. Washington. Think of the analogies there; they are very interesting. Remember the image in Ellison's Invisible Man of the statue of the founder, with a young black man kneeling in front of him, and Ellison's comment that one could not tell if the Founder were lifting a veil from the face of the kneeling man or pulling it more firmly down in place. The point I want to make is that colleges and universities have had as their main mission the socializing of young people to fit into the structures of society as they exist. And those at the top of that society, with the money for endowments and chairs, saw that and acted on it.

Colleges do also provide us with tools, and they do also provide us with access. They also provide us with things that we need -- that we need to change society. But we dare not be cajoled into the belief as feminists -- if we are feminists and if feminism means to you, as it means to me, an interest in changing the world -- that those tools are going to be provided free, that it's going to be anything but a struggle. It is going to be a struggle. And the reason that we meet conflict in excess of what might seem reasonable is because the colleges and universities do in fact serve these broad social purposes. What we are doing when we push for fundamental change in the structure of the curriculum, or when we push for fundamental change in terms of who it is that has access to college, is challenging those broad social purposes and structures. I think it was Richard Wasserstrom, when he was on the Oberlin campus, who quoted a Supreme Court decision about what academic freedom means. One of the questions about academic freedom, a critical question, the decision said, is who will study -- who

will study -- and it is not an open question. It is not an open question at all, for a lot of people can't study, and that is a matter of academic freedom. We are pushing against deeper and broader social structures and social organizations to which colleges contribute. It blinds us to say that women's studies can be absorbed without fundamental change in the priorities of colleges, in the modes of organizing curriculum, in the ways in which we conduct our classes and understand how we relate to each other on campuses. In the same way, it used to blind us on the left to hear people say, "Well, ultimately the goal is to see the state wither away." It may be a goal to see the state wither away, but I haven't the faintest idea what the society would look like; and although we need visions of the future, I think the immediate future and the near future will be a time of conflict and change.

It is going to be essential in such a time for all of us to work and to have the support of each other. And while that takes criticism, it also takes standing up to your own positions and standing up for what you think is correct. I was very troubled at the workshop on racism and sexism yesterday -- extremely troubled by that. And then very cheered by it in a way. I was troubled by it because it seemed to me that again and again people were saying -- and I heard this from faculty and from students both -- "I don't know what do do...I don't know what to do." Well, the only way to find out what to do and the only way to find out what resistance you're going to get -- and the only way, in my judgment, really to learn what society is about and what your discipline is about -- is to begin the process of change. When you begin to take the first small steps, and the second steps, organizing and making sure that you are trying to draw people with you, then you discover what to do. That is how I think people learn: by pressing for change -- by pressing for the admission of minority students, by pressing for change in the curriculum, by pressing institutions to establish ways of dealing with the sexual oppression of female students by male faculty, by raising those kinds of questions. That seems to me the way in which one learns, and also the way in which one gathers allies. And then we can get together, stand together in a loving and critical way, understanding each other.

Let me conclude by referring to the situation we have had at Old Westbury, where there have been some wins and some losses. We have had some significant wins, I really think. We have preserved open admissions at Old Westbury, and there are very few four-year colleges in this country that have open admissions. There is no such thing as open admissions at City University any more, for example; you have to have a certain average to get into the four-year colleges. We have open admissions, and we have preserved a multinational faculty with a high proportion of women. We have lost some things, or we haven't won them yet, but the only reason that anything was won was because students and faculty worked out alliances together. We worked together, and defined goals,

and said, "We're going to stay in it together," and moved forward to do that. And in this sense I think what has gone on at the conference is for me extremely encouraging and very, very healthy. But let me say one other thing about the way we worked at Old Westbury when we had to go and negotiate. When students went on strike, faculty would not cross the picket lines -- we worked together; but we also had our own caucuses -- there was a student caucus, a faculty caucus -- and we disagreed with each other, stood up to each other, and criticized each other. When we were wrong we were told so, and when we thought somebody else was wrong we said so. We had our own agendas. We worked differences out in advance, stayed unified then, and we made some progress against the state of New York, which has finally come around to seeing things to some extent from our point of view.

What I am urging on people is the understanding that what you are engaged in is a very long-term struggle. I think that there is no easy future, and that there will be casualties. And above all, I think that this kind of conference -- and the work that the Women's Studies Committee and Program at GLCA does -- will minimize these casualties, encourage us in the struggle, and give us the tools we need to carry it out.

JOAN STRAUMANIS: My remarks are quite personal and brief. The interdisciplinary discussion that took place before this one somehow impels me to take an unaccustomed disciplinary tack here at the beginning of my remarks to you. This is something that I don't ordinarily do, but I think you will be interested in my first perception of the nature of this conference. You understand that the title of the conference is "The Structure of Knowledge." To a philosoper, that is a very exciting subject! So when Juliana Mulroy and Beth Reed separately asked me to be centrally involved in a conference on the structure of knowledge, I thought we were going to have a philosophy conference, right? Imagine it: a philosophy conference for the whole GLCA and we're going to talk about epistemology from a feminist point of view! Well, we had these very long, awkward telephone calls (I was in Washington at the time), and I'd say, "How exciting, I have all kinds of ideas about feminist epistemology. . ." and I would get these long silences.

As a matter of fact it has been a bit of a shock to discover what has been the role of philosophy in women's studies programs elsewhere. On our campus, for the last eight years (which is as long as I have been at Denison) there has, of course, always been at least one woman on the faculty of the philosophy department; but during most of that time we have had two, and sometimes three female philosophers. (The fact that there are women in the field of philosophy should perhaps be pointed out to some of your own philosophy departments.)

Since the start of women's studies at Denison in 1972, philosophical methods and issues have been featured in our interdisciplinary women's studies course. So I am especially

disturbed to learn that some of you consider philosophy to have been a hindrance rather than a help to women's studies on your campuses. Florence Howe made a similar remark to me about two months ago, when we talked for the first time in depth. At that time I was appalled to learn that Florence didn't feel she could trust very many philosophers -- she apparently takes most of us to be more interested in form than in substance.

These attitudes of some feminists have come to me as a revelation and a disappointment. Think of me as a person who sturggled to become a philosoper after having practiced another discipline for many of years -- a person who aspired to be a philosoper. My hope is to show you that there is another point of view about the relevance of philosophy to feminism.

This first series of remarks has been, as you see, rather personal. Continuing with something even more personal, I next want to make a comment about fatigue. During this weekend, like most of you, I have had very little sleep. On the first day we were here we actually had a session on fatigue...very late in the evening. I was so tired at that session that several people expressed alarm to me afterwards at seeing me so knocked out. I've had very, very little sleep since then and I am now...not tired! (There's a miracle drug in this food we're getting here.)

Next, a confession: I was not as conscious and sensitive as I should have been to some of the problems raised by the student caucus, especially to the problem of racism. I became acutely aware during this conference that we didn't leave our institutional racism behind on our campuses, that it was part of the baggage we brought with us to this retreat in Rochester, Indiana. I think we ought to focus upon it as a group at our next conference. It is especially important that we all come to perceive that color-blindness and race-blindness are themselves forms of racism.

(I'll continue now with my scattered notes; I warned you not to expect my remarks to show much coherence.)

I have taken upon myself the role of commenting on language during this conference. I'd like to do that again now, just to pick out two words that I kept hearing during the sessions.

First word: "fantasy." It's a good word; I really like it, and heard many people use it this weekend. I wonder if you are as aware of that fact as I am. I'm led to ask those of you who are interested in empirical linguistics, which is not my field, whether men also use this word.

Second word: "training." Let's get rid of it! I kept hearing "training," "training," "training," and people, I have found this very surprising. I had always thought of the word "training" as pejorative and although I had sometimes used it of other people, I have never wanted to say it

of myself, thinking it something to be ashamed of. Who would want to admit having been trained instead of educated? Yet here I heard people in both the disciplinary panels and the interdisciplinary discussion describing their own professional preparation as "training." If we were trained, well then, let's do something about it! Are we like vines, to be shaped in a certain direction? Are we willing to be cast in a certain mold? Did we learn nothing in graduate school but repetitive skills we would be content to use uncritically? Perhaps it is not the word "training" that gets in our way, but rather the concept it stands for: If we were indeed "trained" in our respective disciplines, then that fact is not only disturbing, but also very important for understanding the source of the artifical barriers which divide us.

I want to close with some remarks on menstruation. It is very consciousness-raising to have your period during a conference like this one. This may be a first, my friends: I don't know of any other conference where the speaker got up and said that she had her period. [From the audience: "That's also something men don't do."] For that and other reasons, women's studies will never die.

I will make three remarks about menstruation very quickly. (1) I want to repeat a wonderful line by Bonnie Woods. We were talking about menstruation in our room, and Bonnie said she always knows when her period is coming when she has this uncontrollable urge to wear white. (2) I really appreciated the woman who shared with us the instructions for using natural sponge as tampons. Thank you. And, (3) I want to repeat for you and share with you the anger that some of us felt, and that one person expressed in the session on menstruation. We realized suddenly that we don't know the facts, for example, about the relationship between dietary factors and menstrual problems. It is incredible that we don't know these things; they are not traditionally part of our new field of women's studies, they are traditionally part of gynecology, which is not a new discipline! Gynecology is a relatively old descipline, and they have had plenty of time to find out those things.

That's all I want to say, except that in answer to the theme question for this session about plans for the future and what we do next, let me just say, take care of yourselves, your health is important!

Fourth Annual GLCA Women's Studies Conference
THE STRUCTURE OF KNOWLEDGE: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE
November 10-12, 1978

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10

4:00 p.m. Films and discussion -- Fighting Back, discussion led by Brenda Bankart, Wabash; Assertive Training, discussion led by Ann Fitzgerald, Denison; With Babies and Banners, Story of the Women's Emergency Brigade.

7:00 p.m. Welcome -- Beth Reed, GLCA Women's Studies Coordinator

Breaking the Disciplines -- address by Florence Howe, GLCA Visiting Scholar in Women's Studies.

Opening Panel -- Barbara Smith, fellow at the W.E.B. DuBois Institute for Afro-American Research, coeditor of Black Women's Studies (forthcoming '80, Feminist Press), and a forthcoming issue of Conditions, focusing on black women; Mary B. Williams, School of Biological Science, Program on Culture and Science, University of Delaware. Moderator: Joan Straumanis, Philosophy, Denison.

10:00 p.m. Sharing Our Lives -- Is Women's Studies Killing Women? Or -- How can we make better use of scarce time and energy? Discussion led by Paula Goldsmid, Oberlin.

Student Caucus -- led by Claudia Cappio, recent Ohio Wesleyan graduate.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11

9:00 a.m. Concurrent sessions:

Black Women's Studies -- Where are Black Women in Women's Studies? Where are Women in Black Studies? Barbara Smith, with Kaaren Courtney, Ohio Wesleyan.

Glimpses of Women in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Chile, West Africa, Italy -- Eleanor Smith. Afro-American Studies, University of Cincinnati; Margherita Repetto, Unione Donne Italiane, Rome, Italy. Moderator: Marigene Arnold, Anthropology, Kalamazoo.

Men's Responsibility to Women Faculty and Students -- Paul Lauter, SUNY/Old Westbury; Paul Lacey, Earlham; Lisa Godfrey, Kalamazoo.

The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation -- Emily Toth, Pennsylvania State University.

10:45 a.m. Concurrent sessions:

Racism/Sexism Workshop -- Relevance of sexism to the black female in American society, today and yesterday; The paradox of racism/sexism; Which has the greater impact on black females, racism or sexism? Participation by black females in education and in the labor force. Discussants: Marti Rawlings, Denison; Rosetta Moore, Wooster; Elaine

Comegys, Antioch: Elizabeth Freydberg, Denison.

Re-Visions: New Research in Social Science and Philosophy -- Paper presentations and discussion: "Sex Roles and Play Styles in Nursery School," Margaret Berrio, Psychology, DePauw; "Social Determinism," Elaine Martin, Political Science, Albion; "Phases of Adult Life: Women's Attitudes toward Self and Others Across the Life Span," Britt Friedman, Human Development, Oberlin; "Generic 'Man' and Mortal Woman," Joan Straumanis, Philosophy, Denison. Moderator: Elaine Martin.

Household Arts and Fine Arts -- Joyce Parr, Kenyon; Marcia Wood, Kalamazoo; Bonnie Woods, Columbus artist.

1:30 p.m. Women's Sexuality Workshop -- a structured consciousness-raising experience redefining female anatomy. Ann Simon, Antioch; Pat Jeanchild, Yellow Springs (both members of the Women's Sexuality Collective of Yellow Springs).

Examining Bias in Content, Process and Practice -- Concurrent sessions in the following disciplines: English, Psychology, Foreign Languages, Sociology/Anthropology, Natural Sciences, History, Philosophy, Fine Arts.

The purpose of these sessions is to compare some current goals and perspectives of feminist scholarship in various disciplines. The following statement may be used as a common starting point:

There are two basic tasks of feminist scholarship, one of compensation and one of revision. The first one attempts to compensate for the invisibility of women, or sins of omission, within the discipline by validating women's experiences as appropriate for study. The second task examines and critiques the discipline in regard to its sins of commission, involving sexist bias and assumptions which may be deeply embedded in its form, content, or institutional rewards. Participants are encouraged to bring syllabi and other course materials to share.

3:00 p.m. Concurrent sessions:

Kypseli, a film, followed by discussion led by Rita Kipp, Kenyon.

Integrating Material by and about Lesbians into the Curriculum - Barbara Smith, with Ann Fitzgerald, Denison.

Nature, Nurture, and Feminism: Is Biology Destiny? Mary Williams, Biology, University of Delaware, will lead off a debate on the existence and the implications for feminism of genetically-based sex differences. Coordinator: Margaret Berrio, Psychology, DePauw. Resource persons: Brenda Bankart, Psychology, Wabash; Julie Mulroy, Biology, Denison.

4:30 p.m. Concurrent sessions:

Films -- Union Maids; Men's Lives.

Soft Structures and Hard Structures -- Explorations by a philosopher and an artist of social and physical structures and their effects on

our efforts to reshape our lives. How can extant structures be subverted or diverted to the purposes of feminism? How can new structures more conducive to the reshaping of society (towards an androgynous ideal) be invented and implemented?--Joan Straumanis, Philosophy, Denison; Bonnie Woods, Columbus artist.

6:30 p.m. Concurrent sessions:

The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation (Repeat)

Women Faculty and Administrators: Getting in on Decisions that Count -- Paula Goldsmid, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Oberlin (moderator); Vivian Holliday, Dean of the Faculty, Wooster; Lisa Godfrey, Director of Instructional Services, Kalamazoo; Marilyn LaPlante, Acting Provost (second semester 1978-79), Earlham.

Counseling from a Feminist Perspective: Strengthening Ties Between Practice and Scholarship -- How can faculty members be better advisors of women students? How can career counselors be better aware of faculty and student needs? -- Kitty Padgett, career counseling/life planning, Albion.

Women's Sexuality Workshop (Repeat)

8:15 p.m. Concurrent sessions:

Racism/Sexism Workshop (Repeat)

Feminist Interpretations of Literature and Comedy -- Paper presentations and discussion: "Greek Views of Barbarian Women," Robert E. Bennett, Classics, Kenyon; "Images of Women in the Epic," Anne Shaver, English, Denison; "Brigitte Schwaiger, Gisela Elsner, Bridget Pausch: A Comparison of their Treatment of the Mother-Daughter Relationship," Gisela Strand, German, Hope. Moderators: Barbara Jurasek, German, Earlham; Marianne Whelchel, English, Antioch.

How Students Can Influence the Curriculum -- Rita Kipp, Kenyon, with the following Kenyon students: Katie Greenberg, Becky Skidmore, Lisa Wood.

Glimpses of Women in Cross-Cultural Perspective. (Repeat)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12

9:00 a.m. Concurrent sessions:

Black Women's Studies (Repeat)

A Round-table Discussion of Interdisciplinary Teaching: Obstacles and Rewards -- led by Florence Howe, with Paula Goldsmid and Phyllis Jones, Oberlin; Jim Turner, Wooster: Diana Kahn, Oberlin.

10:45 a.m. The Feminist Critique: Plans and Prospects -- Florence Howe, with Rita Kipp, Kenyon, chairperson of the GLCA Women's Studies Committee; Paul Lauter, SUNY/Old Westbury; Joan Straumanis, Denison.